
THE ANGELS OF GOD

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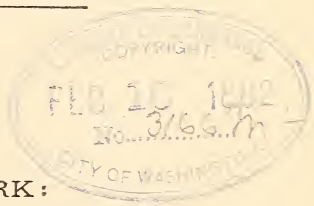
THE

ANGELS OF GOD.

BY

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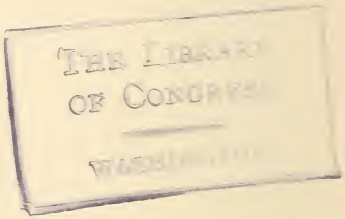
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INTRODUCTION.

THE Angels of God! "What," it may be asked, "do we know about them? What *can* we know?" We often think of them, speak and hear of them; of their ranks and orders, their numbers and ministries, their wonderful powers and their rapturous songs. Nor can we wonder at this; for when we open the pages of the word of God, we behold their bright forms, or their outspread wings, or their chariots and horses of fire; and we read of their power to protect God's chosen people when they are persecuted or endangered; or to inflict vengeance upon their enemies. Our first vision of them is at the gate-way of Paradise, when, with the flaming sword, they kept "the way of the tree of life;" and our last, in the revelation of the divine word, is when

we behold them in the apocalyptic vision, in uncounted multitudes, uttering their everlasting songs of joy. And when we think that these holy beings, with all their vast powers, and superior intelligence, are interested in our race, we learn to love them, although we have never yet seen the brightness of their form, nor the beauty of their face.

Often we have sung in the sanctuary with the assembled multitudes,

> "Angels now are hovering round us,
> Unperceived amid the throng;
> Wondering at the love that crowned us,
> Glad to join the holy song,"

until we have fancied that we have heard their songs and the rustle of their wings. And how frequently have we been soothed into quiet and conscious security, when we have lain down at night surrounded by perils and dangers, with the blessed assurance, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them!"

We have stood by the bedside of the dying

saint, and have heard him exclaim in holy triumph, "The angels have come for me; they are around my bed; they are filling my room:" and have then known him to break forth in the strain,

> "'Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
> O Grave, where is thy victory?
> O Death, where is thy sting?'"

Thus, the fact of the existence of these celestial beings is kept constantly before us, and we cannot, if we would, help thinking of them. It has, therefore, occurred to the author of the following treatise that a volume, embracing the best thought of the Church concerning the angels, might be written, which would not merely interest, but also profit, a large class of readers. Very little, indeed, has been written upon this subject; and much that has been published is merely traditional, and deserving only of being classed among the "old wives' fables" which the Apostle Paul condemned. 1 Tim. iv, 7. The mass of Jewish literature upon this subject is unworthy of reproduction.

We have merely given a few specimens of this literature to show to our readers how little it can be relied upon. The writings, also, of the schoolmen, and of many of the doctors of the Roman Catholic Church, are not only without foundation in the word of God, but are mere conjectures or vagaries.

At present, it is true, our knowledge of the angels is very incomplete. They are invisible to us. However near they may be, still we do not see them, nor do any of our senses discern them. We behold them only in the light of the divine Word—we believe in their existence, orders, and ministrations, upon its authority alone. But that authority is all-sufficient. "The word of the Lord is truth." His "word endureth forever." Whatever is clearly written therein we can with confidence accept, and with all our hearts embrace. And no doubt can be had of its teachings on this subject. The existence of angels is just as clearly stated upon its sacred pages as that of any other fact. To doubt, therefore, or deny

it, would be to unsettle our faith in every other truth of the Bible. This volume does not treat of myths, or imaginary beings; but of existence as real as any that are made manifest to us by our senses. We rejoice, then, in the revealed facts of their existence, and of their relations to us.

Passing by the conjectures and vagaries referred to in another paragraph, the author has purposed to take only the torch of eternal truth in his hand, in the examination of the various questions related to this subject; and to present nothing except what is revealed in the word of the Lord, or what seemed to him to be in entire accordance with its teachings. How far he has succeeded in doing this, his readers can best judge. He has been the more encouraged to prepare this volume for publication because of the kindly reception and somewhat extended circulation of the volumes which he has already sent forth from the press. Allow him to bespeak for this little book the same kind con-

sideration and careful perusal which has been given to his former books.

Dear Christian reader, the time is drawing near when, if faithful, we shall be admitted to the society of angels and archangels, seraphim and cherubim. We shall then "see as we are seen, and know as we are known." The darkness which now rests upon many questions concerning these wonderful beings will then be removed; our knowledge of them will be perfect; and, we trust, will abundantly confirm what we have written here.

LEWIS R. DUNN.

ELIZABETH, N. J., 1880.

LIST OF AUTHORS CONSULTED AND QUOTED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS BOOK.

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CONTENTS.

		PAGE
I.	The Angels—Their Origin and their Confirmation	13
II.	The Nature and Forms of Angels	27
III.	The Power of Angels	48
IV.	Angels—Their Names and Orders	55
V.	The Number of Angels	71
VI.	Are they not all Ministering Spirits?	85
VII.	The Angel of the Covenant	122
VIII.	The Angels and Christ	131
IX.	The Fallen Angels	163
X.	Demonology and Demoniacal Possessions	205
XI.	The Worship of Angels	232
XII.	The Existence of Angels Evidence of a Future State	238
XIII.	Angels and Dying Saints	251
XIV.	Angels at the Resurrection and the Judgment	271
XV.	The Employment of Angels in Heaven	281

"God, who is Spirit,
Bade spirits exist, and they existed. Forms
Of light, in infinite varieties, . . .
Awoke in legions armed, or one by one
Successively appeared. Succession there,
In numbers passing thy arithmetic,
Might be more rapid than my words, and yet
Exhaust the flight of ages. There is space
For ages in the boundless past. But each
Came from the hand of God distinct, the fruit
Of his eternal counsels, the design
Of his omniscient love, his workmanship;
Each seraph, no angelic parentage
Betwixt him and the Great Artificer,
Born of the Spirit, and by the Word create."

—Bickersteth:
Yesterday, To-day, and Forever, p. 121.

THE ANGELS OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANGELS — THEIR ORIGIN AND THEIR CONFIRMATION.

IS there such an order of beings as the angels? Have we any warrant to believe that they have a personal existence? that they are intelligent? and that they are vastly superior in their powers to the human race? Or, is the faith of the Church in their existence, during the ages past, unfounded, and are they, after all, only a myth, like the genii, dii, and fairies of classic story, or merely a childish dream? Very much, as to our comfort, our hope, our peace, and our real happiness, depends upon the way in which these inquiries are answered.

One thing is very certain. That is, that the word of God, from its earliest to its latest revelations concerning angels, speaks of them as persons, as intelligent beings; as inhabitants of

the heavenly world, although often appearing among men; as beings possessed of wondrous powers, as existing in almost countless numbers, as having various orders and names, and as being entirely and constantly employed by God in the accomplishment of his purposes in the world. That word alone gives us an authoritative statement of their existence and of the facts referred to. If we, like too many have done among the Jews, the Schoolmen, and others, go out into the regions of dreamy speculation, fancy, or conceit, we shall soon lose ourselves amid the wildest vagaries, and disgust ourselves and all intelligent persons with the fruits of our folly. But we cannot go far astray while we hold the lamp of eternal truth in our hands as we proceed in our investigations. To this "sure word of prophecy" we shall endeavor "to take heed;" and in all the future pages of this book shall present nothing but what we honestly believe is taught therein, or is in harmony therewith.

It may not be amiss, right here, to consider that, independent of what is taught us in the book of God, it is probable that there are intelligent beings higher in their order, their in-

telligence, and their powers, than man. "We see, in all departments of nature, a regular gradation from the lower to the higher forms of life; from the almost invisible vegetable fungus in plants to the cedar of Lebanon; from the minutest animalcule to the gigantic mammoth. In man we meet with the first, and to all appearance the lowest, of rational creatures. That he should be the only creature of his order is, *à priori*, as improbable as that insects should be the only class of irrational animals. There is every reason to believe that the scale of being among rational creatures is as extensive as that in the animal world. If the distance between God and man be infinite, all analogy would prove that the orders of rational creatures between us and God must be inconceivably numerous." * The fact of their existence being clearly revealed, and that fact being in entire harmony with the highest probabilities, the questions arise, From whence did this order of intelligences spring? When were they created? And by whom? Various answers have been given to these questions. Many of the Jewish writers have

* Hodge: "Systematic Theology," vol. i, p. 637.

contended that they were created with all the other parts of the visible universe. Rabbi Jochanan says: "The angels were created on the second day; this is what is written: 'Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind; who maketh his angels spirits.'" Psa. civ, 3, 4. Rabbi Chanina says: "The angels were created on the fifth day; this is what is found written: 'And fowl that may fly above the earth; . . . and 'with twain he did fly.'" Gen. i, 20; Isa. vi, 2. On the other hand, Rabbi Bechai, in endeavoring to harmonize these views, says: "There are some angels who continue forever, namely, those who were created on the second day; but others perish, according to the explanation of our rabbies of blessed memory, who say, 'That the holy and blessed God created daily a multitude of angels, who sing an anthem to his praise and glory, and then perish; and they are those who were created on the fifth day.'" This daily creation and daily perishing of angels is the doctrine taught in the Jewish Talmud.

Many Christian expositors have expressed

the opinion that they are included in the Mosaic account of the creation, among whom are Dr. Gill, Dr. Lightfoot, and others equally distinguished. We must concede, at the very outset, that the word of God does not give us any definite information regarding the period *when* they were created. The general *concensus*, however, of Christian teaching upon this question is, that they were created a long time anterior to the creation of the material and visible universe, and that, when that great work was accomplished, they not only beheld the laying of its foundation-stone, but were there also uttering their songs of joy.

If, however, we cannot know certainly *when* they were created, we have the most clear and definite knowledge as to *who* created them, and to whom they owe allegiance. John declares that "*All things* were made by him,"—that is, Christ—" and without him was not any thing made that was made." If, therefore, angels are created beings, our only conclusion must be that he made them. In Col. i, 15–17, we read of Christ, " Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature ; for by him were all things created that are in

heaven, *ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*, *in the heavens*, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The Apostle Peter, speaking of Christ, says: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." 1 Pet. iii, 22. Of course, as he is their Creator they are under his authority and control. So St. Paul declares that Christ is set at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Eph. i, 21. In Philippians ii, 9–11, it is said: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, *of things in heaven*, and things in earth, and things under the earth." It is very true that Christ was "for a little while made lower than the angels." But it was for a purpose. It was "for the suffering of death: that he by

the grace of God should taste death for every man," which he could not have done had he not assumed our nature.

Having been created by Christ, all these ranks and orders of intelligences worship him as their Creator and Lord. "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. i, 6. In the vision which Isaiah had in the year King Uzziah died, he saw the six-winged seraphim, as they covered their faces and feet, and flew through the vast expanse, worship him. That this is so, is evident from the language of the Apostle John, when, in referring to this vision, he says, "These things spake Isaiah when he saw his [Christ's] glory and spake of him." xii, 41. In the apocalyptic vision they also appear before us as worshiping him in the highest heavens. Rev. v, 11–14. Once only have human ears heard the rapturous songs of the angels. And let it never be forgotten that these songs were sung in praise of God at the advent of the blessed Christ. The privilege of hearing these angel chimes was accorded to the humble shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, as they fed their flocks

by night. Never was the advent of any human being heralded by such demonstrations of joy. Cannon have thundered from tower and castle, from fortress and vessels of war, and bells have rung out their merry chimes and peals, while multitudes have shouted when a prince has been born; but now the countless multitudes of the heavenly host—outnumbering all the armies and navies of the world, and all the subjects of any human government—uttered their songs of praise, until the heaven of heavens rang again with joy. The echoes of those angel-chimes still linger upon earth's mountains and valleys, and may yet be heard above the din and noise, the bustle and confusion of the world, by eager, listening ears. There can be no doubt, then, that the angels worship and adore Christ. If so, then he is their Creator and Lord, and so divine—very and eternal God; or else they, in rendering this worship, are idolaters. A conclusion, this, too monstrous to be believed.

We have now seen the angels present at the creation, and when the morning stars sang together they, "the sons of God," shouted aloud for joy. We have also seen them at the ad-

vent of *their* Lord and *our* Saviour, uttering songs of rapturous delight. There was one other grand occasion—when God came down on Mount Sinai to give his law—when they were present in large numbers, and, probably, acted as mediators in the dispensation of that law. The royal psalmist says, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, *even thousands of angels:* the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." Psa. lxviii, 17. Stephen, the angel-faced, standing in view of the glories of the heavenly world, in his terrible invective against the Jewish people, says, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Acts vii, 53. So St. Paul declares, in his Epistle to the Galatians, (iii, 19,) "And it—the law—was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." They did not, of course, give the law; but they were God's "ministers and instrumental enactors." So in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, "For if the word—[that is, the law]—*spoken by angels* was steadfast." Thus in the three grandest events known to man—the creation of the world, the giving of the law, and the advent of Christ for the redemption of man

—angels have appeared, singing their songs, ministering the law of their Lord, and proclaiming the wondrous story of his birth.

The fall of angels will be considered in another place. But it is important that we notice here the fact that, while many—how many no one can tell—broke their allegiance and fell from their "first estate," countless numbers maintained their loyalty to their Creator, and having, probably, passed through a period of probation, for a longer or shorter period, were confirmed in their character and allegiance, and fixed in their everlasting abodes of purity and bliss. These are "the elect angels" of whom the apostle speaks in his charge to Timothy. Of this the golden-mouthed Chrysostom speaks, when he says, "Neither may we doubt that the angels themselves need the grace of Christ, the Redeemer, that is to say, the grace of *confirmation* and exaltation, though not the grace of *reconciliation*. For, as they are creatures, they cannot, of their own nature, be beyond danger of falling. . . . Hence, therefore, it is evident, that the grace of Christ, the Mediator, is necessary for the happiness even of angels; not that by

it they should be justified and absolved from sin, but that by it they may be confirmed in the divine love."

With this view all the most eminent divines in the Church are in hearty accord. The eloquent Melvill in one of his sermons, says, "If the angels are now secured against falling away, what has made them secure? What has thrown around them such a rampart against the incursions of evil that there is a certainty of their continuing the obedient and the happy? We know of no satisfactory answer to these questions, but that which supposes the whole universe interested in the suretyship of Jesus and affected by his mediation. Of course, we do not mean that where no sin had been committed there could be need of the shedding of blood. But those who required not expiation, required the being confirmed and established; they required to have their happiness made permanent through some connection of its natural mutability. When, therefore, the Son of God undertook to link the created with the Uncreated, the finite with the Infinite, in his own divine person, he probably did that which gave stability to unfallen orders,

as well as wrought the recovery of a fallen. He raised the disobedient and maintained the obedient; and by the same act rendered it impossible that those then pure beings should be polluted, and possible that men, though polluted, might be cleansed. And now, if you tell me of glorious worlds, where the inhabitants have no sins of which to repent, I cannot, on that account, conclude that they cannot join with me in gratitude to a Mediator. While I thank and bless him for my restoration, they may thank and bless him for their preservation. His the arm which has raised me from ruin; his may be the arm which has retained them in glory. And equally may the Son be occupied with every home of intelligent being, ministering throughout the broad sweep of the spiritual creation, to the rendering those in obedience who are by nature in constant danger of apostasy. Hence, just as we refer it to the immediate agency of God, that stars and planets retain their places, and perform their revolutions, so we should refer it to the immediate agency of Christ, that the successive ranks of the heavenly hosts pre-

serve their glory, and walk their brilliant circuits."*

This certainly gives a broader sweep to our views of Christ's Mediatorial work, that it not only comprehends the race of fallen beings, but that it reaches, also, those who are unfallen, and keeps them secure in their allegiance to the throne of the Most High. No wonder, then, that the songs of angels blend so harmoniously with those of the redeemed and glorified sons of men. It may be that when our eyes are opened to more fully comprehend the mysteries of redemption, we shall see that the cross of Christ is not only upreared in the center of the physical world, but also in the center of the physical universe; and that to it the eye of every intelligent being is turned—"in the heavens" as well as in the earth.

* Melvill's Sermons, p. 300.

"In the apocryphal Book of Maccabees, it is related that Heliodorus resolved to invade the temple of Jehovah, and plunder its treasury. On proceeding to execute his impious purpose 'there appeared to him a horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his fore-feet; and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, *notable in strength*, *excellent in beauty*, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side.'"

"But who is he, in panoply of gold,
Throned on that burning charger? bright his form,
Yet in its brightness awful to behold,
And girt with all the terrors of the storm!
Lightning is on his helmet's crest, and fear
Shrinks from the splendor of his brow severe.

"And by his side two radiant warriors stand,
All armed and kingly in commanding grace—
O, more than kingly! godlike! sternly grand!
Their port indignant, and each dazzling face
Beams with the beauty to immortals given,
Magnificent in all the wrath of heaven."

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND FORMS OF ANGELS.

THERE is evidently a broad distinction made in the word of God between the nature of angels and the nature of men. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, (ch. ii, 16,) "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels;"—in the sense of helping and succoring them;—"but he took on him the seed of Abraham." The argument here is this, that Christ took on him the nature of those whom he would redeem—of those who needed help, succor, and redemption. The elect angels did not need redemption, as they are unsinning and unfallen; but the seed of Abraham—of humanity—needed it, for they are sinful and fallen. What, then, is the nature of the angels?

They are spiritual beings. "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." We have no sympathy with the rationalistic interpretation of this beautiful verse—"Who maketh the winds his angels, and flaming fire his ministers." This may be all true in a mod-

ified sense; but it is too much of a toning down of God's word to be acceptable to those who believe in a divine revelation. Again we read, "Are they not all ministering *spirits?*" By this we understand that they are of a spiritual nature, not compounded of parts, as our bodies are; and yet not so simple and pure spirit as God is, who is absolutely and eternally "a Spirit." It is difficult, and, indeed, impossible, for us to understand what is meant by a spiritual being. All our ideas of existences are associated with more or less of materialism. Even those bodies which formerly were termed imponderable—as light, electricity, etc.—are found to be sufficiently material and tangible to be caught, unbraided, analyzed, yoked to the car of human progress, and made to minister to the wants, conveniences, and necessities of mankind. And man, the highest form of being with which we are brought into direct contact, is very material in all that we see or know of him. Although we must recognize in him faculties which are far above the most refined materialism of which we know any thing—faculties which ally him to the angels and to God, and which give the an-

gels and the Lord of the angels the deepest interest in him—still this is the human spirit acting through visible and tangible forms, and displayed through material instruments. And so, it must be admitted, when the angels have appeared among men, that it has always been in a human form, as seen by mortal eyes; and in bright, celestial forms, when seen in the rapt vision of the prophet or the apostle. Indeed, material and mortal eyes cannot look upon pure spiritual beings.

The question arises here, Do the angels appear in heaven as they have appeared when seen by men and women on the earth, or as they have appeared when seen in vision? We do not believe that this question can be satisfactorily answered. The opinions held by the great names of the Church, and by its great councils, have varied widely, and they will, probably, continue to do so as long as the dim veil of mortality hangs between us and that heavenly world. "It was decided by the Council held at Nice, A. D. 784, that angels had bodies composed of ether, or light; an opinion which they thought was favored by Matt. xxviii, 3; Luke ii, 9, and other passages in

which their form and glory are spoken of. The Council of Lateran, in A. D. 1215, decided that they were incorporeal, and this has been the common opinion in the Church. As such, therefore, they are invisible, incorruptible, and immortal." *

This opinion, however, is very far from being universal: many great expositors holding that they have some material vehicle with which they are united, highly refined in its nature, and at a great remove from the flesh and blood which compose our bodily frames. For our own part, we cannot possibly conceive that any created being in the universe can exist as a pure spirit. We are strongly of the opinion that all the angels, and all redeemed spirits, up to the period of the resurrection, have some kind of investiture, "enswathement," as Joseph Cook, in his lectures, denominates it, in which it appears before God. Light, ethereal as eliminated ether, it may be, but still an organic vehicle suitable to their nature and employments. It would be dogmatic and unphilosophical to say that it is *impossible* for the angels to exist and act as *pure spirits;* but

* Hodge: "Systematic Theology," vol. i, p. 638.

our limited capacities cannot grasp the thought or form the idea of such existences. When we speak of them, therefore, as *spiritual* beings, it is in the same sense in which the apostle speaks of the spiritual body—under the dominancy of the glorified spirit—a body exempted from the grosser forms of earthly bodies which men now possess.

There are two things especially which lead us to this view. First: Our Saviour says that at the resurrection, when these corruptible, mortal, weak bodies shall be made incorruptible, powerful, immortal, and spiritual, then we shall be "*as* [or like] *the angels of God in heaven.*" Secondly: Whenever they have appeared on earth it has been in some form in which they could be seen, conversed with, heard, and touched. We now come to regard the manner of their appearances among men, or *how they have looked as seen by mortal eyes.*

To Adam and his more immediate descendants the cherubim appeared in forms to us unknown, with "a flaming sword which turned every way," guarding the tree of life. To Abraham the angels appeared as men, having feet which were washed, bodies which stood,

sat, and ate, one of the three being recognized and worshiped as the Angel of the Covenant, Jehovah of Hosts. These men were made known to Lot as angels, although they appeared as men, having human wants of shelter, lodging, and food. Not only so. They had hands: for while Lot lingered they laid hold upon his hands, and upon the hands of his wife, and upon the hands of his two daughters." The angel which appeared in the way of Balaam was recognized by the ass before he was seen by the false prophet. But, when Balaam saw him, "he stood in the way with a drawn sword in his hand," having a voice, and addressing him in words which he distinctly understood. It is not said in what form the angel appeared to Gideon. But from the narrative we conclude that he must have had a human form; for he sat under the oak at Ophrah and talked with Gideon familiarly, so much so, indeed, that it was some time before the chosen leader knew that he was an angel. To the wife of Manoah the angel appeared, speaking in words which she understood; but "his countenance was like an angel of God, very terrible." And yet his whole appearance must

nave been that of a man: for when she ran to tell her husband of his *second* appearing, she said, "Behold, *the man* hath appeared unto me that came unto me the other day." Notwithstanding this, both of them recognized him as an angel of God, who departed from them in a flame of fire. It was thus indicated to them that while he had the form of a man he had powers of transformation unaffected by the laws of gravitation, which enabled him to ascend toward heaven, and to become invisible to them. We have no definite information of the form of the angel who appeared to David. All we learn of him is, that he stood by the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite; and afterward that David saw him with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem, standing between the earth and heaven. Of course, he must have appeared in *some* form, because he *stood* by the floor of Araunah, and had a drawn sword in his *hand*. And yet, so light, self-supporting, and ethereal was he, that he stood upon the elastic air between the earth and heaven.

It was not until the time of the prophet Isaiah, that the celestial beings are repre-

sented as *having wings*, with which they "fly swiftly," and with which they cover their faces and feet as they worship in the heavenly courts. We never now think of an angel without wings. In all representations of them by painters and sculptors they are winged; and it is in this form that poets most frequently speak of them. One thing, however, has always seemed strange to us; it is this: that while in the word of God they always appear before us *as men*, and are spoken of in the masculine gender, all the representations referred to, in marble, on canvass, or in poetical conception, are in the female form. We know of hardly any great artists who have ever represented them otherwise. Perhaps it is because they have never seen any thing in man which has borne any resemblance to their conceptions of an angel's form or grace; while now and then a woman's form and features, her face smiling in beauty, and her character adorned with every grace, has come nearer to the ideal of an angel than any thing else seen in this world, excepting it be the innocence, loveliness, and beauty of the form and face of childhood.

No mention is made of the form or appear-

ance of Gabriel when he appeared to Zacharias, or in the annunciation to Mary. Nor do we learn any thing of how the angels looked who appeared to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, or of the multitude of the heavenly host who in mid-heaven uttered their songs of joy. But the women who saw the angels at the tomb of our Lord after his resurrection give us some clear ideas of their appearance at that time. In Matthew we read of the angel who descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulcher, that "his *countenance was like lightning*, and *his raiment white as snow:* and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Mark relates that the women saw "a *young man* sitting on the right side of the sepulcher, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted." Luke says that "two men stood by them in shining garments." And John records that Mary saw "two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain." There need be no labored effort to harmonize these various statements. *They are all true.* There was more than *one* angel honored in par-

ticipating in this wonderful scene. Glimpses were only enjoyed by some of the women—sometimes of one, then of two: sometimes in one form and place, and sometimes in another. But as multitudes of angels participated in the scenes of the nativity, and, subsequently, at the ascension, so now, doubtless, multitudes were around the vacated tomb. And, had the eyes of the women been "opened," they would, very probably, have seen the very air all gleaming with their white wings and shining garments. At the ascension of our Lord into heaven, as his form disappeared from the wondering and wildering gaze of the disciples, "two men stood by them in white apparel," and gave comfort to their sorrowing hearts by the words which they spoke. Here they appear and speak as *men*, in the language of men; although, no doubt, they were only a part of the rear guard of the cherubic legions who were escorting their Lord to his eternal throne in the heavens; and when they had delivered their message to the disciples, rejoined the main body as they appeared before the gates of pearl.

In the book of Revelation, still more than

in that of Ezekiel, the angels are every-where brought to our view—acting in various capacities, intensely interested in participating in the affairs of nations and in providential dispensations, fulfilling the high behests of their Lord, and hymning his praises before the everlasting throne. But we gain very little information as to the form in which they appeared before the eye of the revelator. For many things connected with their appearance we must wait patiently until the dim veil which separates us from that glory-land is removed, and there are revealed to us, in the clear light of eternity, their beautiful forms and faces, the luster of their white robes, and the swiftness of their flight. But few persons have ever thought of the angels who have not desired to see them, and to know more than we can know now of their forms and appearances; but our heavenly Father has, no doubt wisely, prevented this. Perhaps our mortal eyes are too dim to gaze upon their glory. Perhaps the sight of their unsullied purity would discourage us. Or it may be that, as the shepherds and the women were "affrighted" when they saw the angels, and Daniel was so affected by

the appearance of one of them that his comeliness was turned in him into corruption, and he retained no strength, while his attendants, who saw not the vision, were so conscious of an invisible presence that a great quaking fell on them, and they fled to hide themselves,—so we could not bear the sight of them in our present weakness, and our frame is too feeble to bear the presence of such purity and power. The true Christian can afford to wait until the darkness, the ignorance, and the frailty of the present state have passed away; when he knows that he shall not only *see* them, but will be companioned with them forever. Having thus presented our reasons for the position assumed, that while angels are spiritual beings they have yet *some form* in which they appear, and which they may have the power of changing according to the work or the mission which they may be appointed to accomplish, we now proceed to consider their nature.

They are pure and holy beings. In several places our Lord himself calls them "the *holy* angels." Every reference to them in the word of God gives us to understand that no breath of pollution, of evil, or of sin, has ever marred

them, or stained the brightness of their character. Their purity is, indeed, unsullied, their holiness undimmed by any frailty or defect, such as mars even the saintliest beings on the earth. Their wills are in perfect harmony and eternal accord with the will of God. They do his will in heaven. They "do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." And in their perfect holiness there is the blending of perfect humility. They veil their faces with their wings as they worship before the throne. And not only so: they are ready and willing to do the humblest services for the heirs of salvation. No dwelling of poverty is so obscure, no home so wretched and distressed, but they are ready to dwell there with God's saints, and to minister to his children. No one who, in the light of divine revelation, beholds the angels carrying Lazarus to Abraham's bosom, can ever doubt this. How ashamed, then, ought we to be of our vanity and pride, and of our ofttimes want of reverence when we appear before God!

They are beings of great wisdom and understanding. This is clearly indicated to us in the visions of Ezekiel and St. John, when they are

represented as being "*full of eyes before and behind.*" Does not this signify that they know what is past and what is in the future? Hence they foretell future events to the prophets and apostles. They know the affairs of empires, kingdoms, and states. Dr. Dwight says: "Angels are endowed with the greatest intellectual faculties, and are, of course, possessed of knowledge superior to that of any other created beings. They are declared to be *full of eyes within;* that is, to have been all sense, all intellect, all consciousness, beholding at once all things within the reach of their understanding, and discerning them with a clearness of perception which is the most perfect created semblance of the intuitive and boundless views of the Omniscient Mind."

So Mr. Wesley, speaking of their wisdom, says: "What an inconceivable degree of *wisdom* must they have acquired by the use of their faculties, over and above that with which they were originally endued, in the course of more than six thousand years! How immensely must their wisdom have increased, not only by surveying the hearts and ways of men in their successive generations, but by observ-

ing the works of God—his works of creation, providence, and grace; and, above all, by continually beholding the face of their Father which is in heaven?" Furthermore he says: "Who can comprehend what is *the understanding* of an angel? Undoubtedly they see, at one glance, whatever truth is presented to them, and that with all the certainty and clearness that we poor mortals see the most self-evident axiom. Who, then, can conceive the *extent of their knowledge?* Not only of the nature, attributes, and works of God, whether of creation or providence, but of the circumstances, actions, words, tempers, and thoughts of men." Great, however, as their understanding and wisdom are, they are limited. Our Saviour says, that they do not know the day nor the hour when the scenes connected with the last judgment will burst upon the world. And they are represented as desirous of knowing more fully the wonders of redemption—"Which things the angels desire to look into:"

> "The first-born sons of light
> Desire in vain its depths to see;
> They cannot reach the mystery,
> The length, the breadth, the height."

They are beings of great activity. The swiftness of their flight is evidenced in Dan. ix, 21. While the prime minister and prophet was yet praying, Gabriel, "being caused to fly swiftly," brought the answer. He said to Daniel, "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee." So in the vision of Isaiah, while he was still overwhelmed with a sense of his vileness and of the uncleanness of his lips, the seraphim flew unto him, having the living coal of purging and purification, and laid it upon his lips. How swiftly they flew to the rescue of Elisha! In one night all the mountain round about Dothan was covered with their chariots and horses of fire. Jesus said to Peter, who, in his zeal for his Master, had cut off the ear of the servant of the high-priest, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall *presently* give me more than twelve legions of angels?" In Ezek. i, 14, we read, "And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." And St. John says, And the four living creatures "had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within; . . . and they *rest*

not day and night." No lightning flash or electric spark is so quick in its motion, as the wonderful movements of these celestial beings.

They are *possessed of great beauty and glory.* The vision which Daniel had on the banks of the river Hiddekel gives us some idea of their beauty and glory. The wonderful being who there appeared to him, the description of whom resembles very closely that which John gives of the glorified Redeemer, is thus presented before us: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." Dan. x, 5, 6. The revelator, also, saw a "mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." Rev. x, 1. Thus they are like their Lord, and shine in his beauty and glory. When the angel ap-

peared to the shepherds, "the glory of the Lord," reflected from his face and form, "shone round about them." So when the angel came down to roll away the stone from the door of Christ's sepulcher, "his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." Angels are frequently represented as wearing "shining garments."

The highest skill of the painter and the sculptor has been employed in their efforts to transfer to the canvass and the marble their own ideal of the beauty and glory of the angels. But the genius of Raphael, or of Michael Angelo, has never been equal to the task, beautiful and sublime as are the creations of their genius, on which the world has gazed with admiration for the ages past. No one ever yet saw any representation of them which has measured up to his own ideal of their beauty. The sweet, lovely innocence of the babe; the bright, shining countenance illuminated by the smile of the Lord; the uplifted face of Stephen, reflecting his glory, are all suggestive to us, and typical of this beauty, but they only furnish us with dim conceptions of that glory and beauty which we hope to behold when

our eyes are made capable of beholding them. But any representations of them which indicate beauty, innocence, and gentleness merely, must, necessarily, be defective. For they not only have great beauty, but, also, *great power*. The evidences of this are so numerous that we shall devote a separate chapter to its consideration.

They are not only deathless, but also ever young. Those angels which appeared to the women at the resurrection, are described by them as "*young men*." We do not know how old they were. But they were then, doubtless, at least four thousand years old, and yet there was no trace of age upon their face and brow. No sickness, toil, care, pain, weakness, or weariness is ever experienced by them; and their bodies will never know age or decay.

The angels which appeared to Mary at the sepulcher of Jesus were then, at the least, four thousand years old. Still they appeared as *young men;* and in all that long succession of ages had undergone no decay. "Their youth, a bright and beautiful blossom, still shone with all its luster and fragrance; and directly indi-

cated that it was superior both to accident and time; and would, after many such flights of years, survive in all its vigor; being destined as well as fitted for immortality. Even this is probably an imperfect representation of this glorious subject." *

Then it is said of them that they are the "*living ones*"—immortal natures which can never die. When the Sadducees, who denied the existence of either angel or spirit, presented what they thought was an unanswerable objection to the doctrine of the future state, Christ answered them, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Matt. xxii, 29. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage." Luke xx, 35. *Neither can they die any more:* "for they are equal unto the angels." The question of their deathlessness is thus settled. "The possession of ever-vigorous, ever-blooming youth, destined to survive and triumph over time and labor, must carry with it a sense of personal importance which, tempered and refined by perfect hu-

* Dwight, vol. i, p. 296.

mility, cannot but be elevated in a manner to which there is no parallel."

"Angels, then, present us with an object of contemplation, resplendent with inherent light, beauty, and greatness, with nothing to tarnish, nothing to impair, its luster; nothing to alloy the pleasure of the beholder; a vivid landscape, formed of all the fine varieties of novelty and greatness without one misshapen, decayed, or lifeless object to lessen its perfection; a morning of the spring without a cloud to overcast it; a sun without a spot, shining only with the various colors of unmingled light." *

* Dwight, vol. i, p. 299.

CHAPTER III.

THE POWER OF ANGELS.

THIS is a subject of so much interest, it is so frequently presented before us in the word of God in various forms, and enters so largely into the faith of the Church, that, although directly related to the nature of angels, we devote this chapter to its special consideration.

The royal psalmist speaks of them as the "angels which excel in strength." The Son of God calls them the "mighty angels." The revelator speaks of a *strong angel*, proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to unloose the seals thereof?" Rev. v, 2. Also of "an angel having *great power*, and the earth was lightened with his glory." Rev. xviii, 1. St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians of the time "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his *mighty angels*." 2 Thess. i, 7. Even the fallen angel is called "the god of this world," "the prince of the power of the air." And, as Mr.

Wesley says, "Any good angel must have more power than even an archangel ruined."

But, in the consideration of this question, we are not left merely to these utterances, although they are sufficient to indicate to us the greatness of their power. There are furnished to us in the word of God numerous illustrations of their wonderful and terrible power, a power which extends over physical nature, over men, and over devils, against which human governments, vast armies of men, with all their warlike appliances, and even all "the fiendish crew of hell," are as nothing.

The first illustration of this power is seen when they smote the men of Sodom with blindness, and, afterward, when at their command the cities of the plain were swept by the fire-storm, blotted forever out of existence, and the dark billows of the Dead Sea made to roll where once they stood in their wickedness and pride.

Again, we read that in one night "the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they [that is, the few survivors] arose early in the morning, behold,

they were all dead corpses." Isa. xxxvii, 36. How great the power here displayed against this proud and hitherto victorious army, which had even, through its commander, dared to blaspheme and defy the God of Israel! And if *one* angel could accomplish such a work, what must be the power of an innumerable multitude? Then let us look again at that angel which David saw standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand. In a very brief period seventy thousand men had died, and, at the divine command, he had now come to destroy the city of Jerusalem, but was prevented from so doing by the mercy of the Lord, because he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed: "It is enough: stay now thine hand."

There was a wonderful array of power for the protection and preservation of Elisha, when the mountain by Dothan was "*full* of horses and chariots of fire." We cannot tell why *so many* were sent to protect one man, when one angel has such wondrous power. No wonder that the prophet was so calm with such a guard around him. And, if our eyes were opened in the time of our peril and dan-

ger, we should, probably, see something of the same heavenly array for our defense and safety. The angel of the Lord "shut the lions' mouths" that they could not hurt Daniel when he was cast into their den. What power it required to do this is seen from the fact that when those men which had accused the prophet, "with their wives and children, were cast into the den, the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den." Peter lies bound in the prison, and four quaternions, or sixteen soldiers, are appointed to keep him, by day and by night, as if Herod feared that prison bars and prison walls were not strong enough. On each side of him is a soldier, to whom he is chained, and before the prison doors "the keepers kept the prison." But the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison, and illumined its dark and gloomy walls. At the touch of the angel "the chains fall off from his hands" so lightly and quietly that the keepers are not awakened. He arises, puts on his sandals, and throws his garment around him, passes through the first and second ward

of the prison unobserved and unharmed, comes to "the iron gate, which opened of its own accord," and is free, "delivered out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Acts xii, 6, 11.

In the book of Job and in the book of Revelation they are represented as having power over the elements of nature, holding the four winds of heaven, and employing them as instruments of vengeance or of grace, in obedience to the divine command, and in harmony with the divine will. "In all these instances angels are exhibited as endowed with might to which other intelligent creatures can make no pretensions, and of which men cannot form any adequate conception."

But all this power is limited, dependent and derived. For they are only creatures, and are "subject to all the limitations which belong to creatures. They cannot create, they cannot change substances, they cannot alter the laws of nature, they cannot perform miracles, they cannot act without means, and they cannot search the heart; for all these are prerogatives which belong to God.

"The power of angels is, therefore: 1. De-

pendent and derived. 2. It must be exercised in accordance with the laws of the spiritual and material world. 3. Their intervention is not optional, but permitted as commanded by God, and at his pleasure; and, so far as the external world is concerned, it would seem to be only occasional and exceptional. These limitations are of the greatest practical importance. We are not to regard angels as intervening between us and God, or to attribute to them the effects which the Bible everywhere refers to the providential agency of God."*

*Hodge, vol. i, page 638.

"YET far more faire be those bright cherubim,
Which all with golden wings are over dight,
And those eternal seraphim,
Which from their faces dart out fierce light."

—SPENSER.

"The helmed cherubim,
And sworded seraphim,
As seen in the glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn choir
With inexpressive notes to heaven's born heir.

—MILTON.

"Where the bright seraphim in burning row,
Their loud uplifted trumpets blow,
And the cherubic host in thousand choirs,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires.

CHAPTER IV.

ANGELS—THEIR NAMES AND ORDERS.

THESE wonderful beings, whose existence and powers are thus revealed in the word of God, are spoken of under various names, and as existing and acting in different ranks and orders. But, by whatever name they are called, and to what rank soever they belong, they are always referred to as celestial beings, dwelling in another sphere, possessed of grander faculties and powers than men, and as spotlessly holy, and undeviatingly doing the will of God. The most common and general designation of these beings is:

1. *Angels.* All their thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, names and titles, are known under this general name. The Hebrew word thus translated is מַלְאָךְ, (*malack*,) and the Greek word is ἄγγελος, (*angelos*.) Both words have the same signification, and denote a messenger, or one sent. They are all God's messengers, sent forth by him to do his bidding, obeying always his high behests, bearing to all

worlds, throughout all the vast immensity of space, his messages, and fulfilling his wonderful designs.

2. *Seraphim.* This is from a Hebrew word, signifying *burning ones.* "They are an order of angels and ministers of God, who stand around his throne, each having six wings, also hands and feet, and praising God with their voice. They are, therefore, of human form," (or something resembling the human form,) "furnished with wings, as the swift messengers of God, like the cherubim; though by no means identical with them, as some have supposed. They are so called, as being of elevated rank—princes; as in Daniel, the archangels are also called "princes." Dan. x, 13.* It has been thought by some that they are thus called because it is *their* mission to execute on the wicked the fiery judgments of God. But the more general idea is, that this name is given to them because of their burning love for their Creator, their flaming zeal for his honor and glory, and the intense, glowing, purity of their nature. We never use the word, in any of its relations, without referring in our

* Robinson's "Gesenius," *in loco.*

minds to one or the other of these elements in their character. Isaiah's vision of these beautiful beings is one of the most thrilling in the word of God. In like manner, although the name is not there given to them, yet, in comparing this with the vision of Isaiah, we can have no doubt as to who the living ones were which John saw on the Patmos isle, as the vision is recorded in Rev. iv, 6–8.

3. *Cherubim.* This name signifies fullness of knowledge. In the earliest accounts of them they are represented to us as possessed of a form, erect, with a face, with two wings, and hands. Ezekiel represents them as having four faces—of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, but sometimes, as in xli, 19, only with two faces, or those of a man and a lion, and the whole body as full of eyes. Thus indicating that they have the power of flying, looking, walking, in any direction, without the necessity of turning backward.

The earliest mention of them is in Gen. iii, 24, where we read as follows: "So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden *cherubim*, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the

way of the tree of life." They had thus intrusted to them the task of guarding the approaches to the tree of life. No previous mention is made of them ; and they are the first order of angelic beings brought to our notice. They flame right out here, in the very earliest periods of the history of our race, with the flaming sword turning every way, showing that they are not only beings of great knowledge, but also of great power. Faber and others suppose that these beings guarded the tree of life until the time of the deluge, otherwise it would have remained in an exposed and accessible condition. It is also suggested by him, and not without great show of probability, that the knowledge of their form and appearance, in view of the longevity of the antediluvians, could have easily been transmitted to the time of Abraham, and so on to the time of Moses. This may be, indeed, the very basal idea of those forms which were made for the tabernacle, and afterward for the temple.

We know that when Moses was commanded to construct the tabernacle, according to the divine plan showed him in the mount, he was required to "make two cherubim of gold, of

beaten work, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be." Exod. xxv, 18-20. Also, in making the "veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen . . . of cunning work;" it was ordered that "with cherubim shall it be made." Exod. xxvi, 31. So we read in chap. xxxvii, 7, Bezaleel made them "two cherubim of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-seat." It is not at all improbable that, by the tradition referred to, Bezaleel, and the whole congregation of Israel, may have had some knowledge of their general form and appearance, as handed down from the earliest ages. It was from between these cherubim that God promised to meet and commune with his ancient people, through their chosen and anointed high-priests.

So when Solomon built the temple, he was required to make cherubim, and their forms were every-where seen in that magnificent building. Their gold-covered wings stretched

over the oracle from wall to wall. They were carved on all the walls of the house of the Lord, and upon its massive and beautiful doors. They were on the borders of the great brazen sea; and last, but by no means least, their wings "covered the place of the ark, and the staves thereof above."

When the psalmist prayed that the Lord might stir up his strength before "Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh," he cried, "Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth!" Psa. lxxx, 1. When Hezekiah cried for deliverance from the hosts of Rab-shakeh, he said: "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth." 2 Kings xix, 15.

Of all the prophets and inspired writers of the word of God, Ezekiel speaks of these wonderful beings the most frequently. It would seem as if their forms, grand and majestic, were ever flitting before his eyes. He saw them by the river Chebar; he saw them in his vision of the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, whither he had been miraculously transported; he saw them lift up their wings, and the won-

drous wheels, full of eyes, beside them, when God gave the promise of restoring his people to their land; and he saw them, in vision, upon the walls and doors of the new temple which was to be built in the near future.

Their precise form is unknown to us. The representations of them in the tabernacle and temple are, perhaps, irrecoverably lost, and we can only conjecture how they appeared from the partial descriptions given of them in the word of God. They were, doubtless, "compound figures, unlike any living animal, or real object in nature; but rather a combination in one nondescript artificial image of the distinguishing properties of several."*

It is further evident that the surrounding nations borrowed these emblems, or endeavored to improve upon them, by embodying what they knew of them with their own idolatrous conceptions. The conjectures as to their form and appearance have been multiplied; often crude and meaningless, often the result of much erudition and careful investigation, but mostly unsatisfactory, as all mere conjectures are apt to be. To us the fact that they

* M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclop., Art., Cherubim.

are represented as deeply interested in the work of our redemption is matter of the deepest interest. This is shown in their position at the mercy-seat in the tabernacle and temple, where, with their eager faces turned downward toward the lid of the mercy-seat, they illustrate what the apostle declares of them: "Which things the angels desire to look into." They are also represented as connected with the work of Providence, as seen in the visions of Ezekiel. At other times we behold them employed in the various processes of nature. The psalmist says of God: "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind." Psa. xviii, 10. Thus in the works of nature, the wonders of redemption, and the mysterious operations of divine providence, they have a part—a mission unknown to us—but grand and glorious beyond our loftiest conceptions. For further and fuller knowledge of them, of their rank and order, we can afford to wait until "the day breaks, and the shadows flee away."

4. *Archangels.* According to Jewish traditions there are four orders of angels, each un-

der the leadership of an archangel; the first order being that of Michael, the second that of Gabriel, the third that of Uriel, and the fourth that of Raphael. In the word of God only *two* archangels are spoken of, Michael and Gabriel, and the latter is only inferentially of this rank. The apocryphal books mention Uriel and Raphael. The "Book of Enoch" mentions seven. The only places in the word of God where this title occurs are, in 1 Thess. iv, 16: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the *archangel*, and with the trump of God;" and in Jude 9, "Yet Michael the *archangel*, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Michael is also spoken of in Dan. x, 13-21: where he appears as the patron and guardian of the Jewish nation. Again, in the book of Revelation, xii, 7, "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels." Gabriel is spoken of in Luke i, 19; "And the angel answering said unto him, [Zacharias,] *I am Gabriel, that stand in the*

presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings." Also in ver. 26: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth." In Rev. viii. 2, we read of seven angels who *stand before God.* They are represented as having authority over other angels, and as having charge of particular nations. It is not at all impossible that these seven angels may be ranked, as the book of Enoch states, as archangels. The angels are frequently spoken of as *hosts*, and armies; and as having heads, or leaders, who are designated by this term. To the archangel Gabriel was given the honor of announcing the first advent of our Lord; it may be that he will have the honor of proclaiming his second. He will be at the head of all the mighty angels who shall appear with the Son of Man when he comes in his glory. Thedoret has well said, "That if the sound of the trumpet, when the law was given from Mt. Sinai, was so dreadful to the Jews that they said unto Moses, Let not the Lord speak unto us, lest we die; how terrible must be the sound of this trumpet [the archangel's] which will call all men to the

final judgment!" In reference to the contention between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses, various conjectures have been made. "In the Targum of Onkelos on Deut. xxxiv, 6, it is stated that the grave of Moses was given into the special custody of Michael. This primitive tradition is referred to by Jude, and by him treated as a matter of fact; and is to be regarded as matter of fact by all who hold this epistle as part of the Canonical Scriptures."*

5. *Sons of God.* This title is only once applied to angels in the Bible, Job xxxviii, 7. For the latter clause the Chaldee renders, in place of "all the sons of God," all the troops of angels. "This appellation indicates their origin as created by God, and their very near relations to him. They are his unfallen sons. They are his eldest sons. Their brightness and glory are like the morning stars. They stand near to his throne, reflecting his glory and forever uttering his praise." All true believers are also called sons of God. But they are so by adoption and free grace, though faith in Christ Jesus. The angels are

* Alford, *in loco.*

sons by creation, and the ties of their filiation have never been sundered. Yet, such is their interest in saved and redeemed men, that they are unceasing in their praises of the work of redemption, which secured their adoption into the family of God; and are evermore employed in carrying out the purposes of that redeeming work.

6. *Watchers.* These are spoken of only in the book of Daniel, iv, 13–17, 23, and in connection with the remarkable dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The word signifies one who wakes, or watches, and excites others. Bishop Horsley contends that these are not angels, but denote the persons of the Godhead. In this opinion, however, he has had only a small following. Calvin and Calmet, and nearly all Protestant and Catholic writers regard the word as referring to the angels. The word indicates their sleepless vigilance. They watch by day and by night the objects of their care. There is no cessation in their service, as they go forth on tireless wing to do the bidding of their Lord.

7. *Living Ones.* In the book of Revelation these ζωα, are very improperly spoken of in our

translation as "*beasts*." In Ezekiel's vision they are denominated, as they should have been in John's, "living creatures" or living ones. That is, indeed, the very meaning of the word, and it is difficult to understand why our translators rendered it as they did. There is nothing about them by which they could be compared to beasts. They are represented as having parts, endowments, powers, superior to beasts. They are not only spoken of as intelligent, but as having the highest forms of intelligence. "They are full of eyes, before and behind." They are six-winged, like Isaiah's seraphim; and so ceaseless is their praise that they rest not day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Indeed, it would seem as if they were the very leaders of the heavenly choirs; for "when these living ones give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits upon the throne, and who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before the throne, and worship him, and cast their crowns before him." We trust that in the revision of the Scriptures, this word ζωα will be properly rendered, which will save a

multitude of explanations and misconceptions growing out of the present unfortunate rendering.

8. *Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers.* These are referred to by the Apostle Paul in Col. i, 16, where he speaks of Christ as the creator of all things "that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible." In a similar manner he says to the Ephesians that Christ is now at the right hand of God, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Some writers have vainly endeavored to distinguish between these various titles and orders, and to assign their places in the heavenly world. But, as Meyer well remarks, "For Christian faith it remains fixed, and it is sufficient, that there is testimony borne to the different degrees and categories in the world of spirits above; but all attempts to fix their degrees, beyond what is written in the New Testament, belong to the fanciful domain of theosophy."

We have thus presented the principal names, titles, and orders of these celestial be-

ings, as they are referred to in the word of God. There are other names, such as "gods," and "morning stars," which are applied to them, which we need not pause to consider. Those which have been given serve to show most clearly how nearly these wonderful beings are allied to God, how high they rank in the order of intelligences, how wonderful are their powers, how important are their employments, how unslumbering is their vigilance, and how unceasing are their songs of praise. We have not found it necessary to wander off into the airy region of dreams, speculations, and conjectures to form a proper estimate of these celestial beings. In fact, just in proportion as we leave the teachings of the divine word on this subject, the more crude, puerile, unintelligent, and unsatisfactory are our conceptions. Enough is revealed to show us how numerous and glorious and how powerful they are, and, what is of still greater importance to us, what interest they have in us; and, generally, what ministrations they fulfill for us. For the rest we wait until we see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

"AN innumerable company of angels."

"Thrones, virtues, principalities, and powers,
Over whose names and high estates of bliss
I must not linger now, crowned hierarchs;
And numbers without number under them
In order ranged—some girt with flaming swords,
And others bearing golden harps, though all
Heaven's choristers are militant at will,
And all its martial ranks are priestly choirs."

—BICKERSTETH:
Yesterday, To-day, and Forever.

"There were the cherubim instinct with eyes:
And there the crowned elders on their thrones,
Encircling with a belt of starry light
The everlasting throne of God; and round,
Wave after wave, myriads of flaming ones
From mightiest potentates and mid degrees,
Unto the least of the angelic choirs."—*Ibid.*

CHAPTER V.

THE NUMBER OF ANGELS.

WE have no powers of computation by which we are able to give even a proximate estimate of the number of the angels of God. The numbers which are furnished us in the word of God, while, in some instances, they are somewhat definite, only serve to show us how vast and incomprehensible they are. All along the line of sacred story, from Genesis to Revelation, the sacred writers, inspired by the Holy Ghost, tell us something of the countless hosts of these celestial beings. The first glimpse afforded us of these numbers is in the vision of the patriarch Jacob, on his way to Padan-Aram, as he lay sleeping upon his earthy bed and his stony pillows. There he saw a ladder, stretching from earth to heaven, (perhaps emblematical of the divine and human nature of the Son of God,) and "the angels of God ascending and descending upon it." Not only did the patriarch see the whole distance from earth to heaven spanned by this

ladder, but all along the vast sweep the angels were thronging it in their upward and downward flight. No doubt can be entertained, here, that the vision was intended to teach it is only through our Lord Jesus Christ that the visitations and ministrations of angels are enjoyed by the children of men. The Son of God himself declared to Nathanael, in the midst of his wonderment and surprise at the revelation of the Messiah to him as the Son of God, the King of Israel: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Again the patriarch was permitted to meet the angels of God. It was on the return journey from the land of his sojourn, and as he was fleeing with his family and servants, and numerous flocks and herds, from the shrewd meanness and unnatural selfishness of Laban. A great trial was before him. "He fled from one peril and danger only to encounter another, which, at least for the time, seemed more formidable and dangerous. For Esau, his offended and enraged brother, had somehow heard of Jacob's flight, and was on his

way to meet him with four hundred men, and, doubtless, with a hostile intent." All this was unknown at the moment, although the wily and wary patriarch had taken precautionary measures to appease the wrath of his brother, who had now become a powerful sheik, and the head of a warlike tribe, and by his marriage with one of the descendants of Ishmael was, doubtless, in alliance with the wild and predatory Bedouins of the desert. The history of this event opens beautifully, and closes with a grand triumph for Israel, then the "prince, having power with God and with man, and prevailing." "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when he saw them, he said: This is *God's host*. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim, which signifies, *two hosts*." These angels were God's hosts, mayhap the same which he had seen in the vision as he went toward Haran. But why "did he call the name of that place Mahanaim, that is, two camps? to intimate that the host of God had been his protectors, when wandering from his father's house, and were still engaged for his defense now that he is returning to the land of his kindred? Or did

he wish to indicate that the host of God encamped before him as his vanguard, and behind him as his rearward? It matters not; the truth abides the same. 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' Some good men have sought to prove from the Scriptures that God gives each of his children a guardian angel. This is not half the truth. He gives many. He gives *a host*; yea, he gives *two camps* for their defense."*

Angels are frequently represented as God's army, God's soldiers, fighting for his people against their enemies, and encamping round about them for their safety and protection. The appearance of these angels was designed to assure Jacob of God's protection amid the difficulties and dangers which were now, although unknown to him, surrounding his way.

The next appearance of a multitude of angels was upon Mount Sinai, in the midst of the grand and sublime accompaniments of the giving of the law. Although not directly referred to by the historian, their presence on

* Dr. Berg, "Demons and Guardian Angels, p. 212.

that occasion is referred to by the psalmist sublimely, when he exclaims: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels: [marginal reading:] the Lord is among them as in Sinai, the holy place." Saint Stephen also refers to the presence of angels on that wonderful occasion. It was the angels who sounded the trumpet and ministered before the Lord as he descended upon the burning and quaking mount; and they were the instruments through whom the law was given.

The next vision of their numbers was reserved for the persecuted and faithful prophet of the Lord, Micaiah. He was suddenly summoned into the presence of Ahab, the king of Israel, who hated him because he only prophesied evil concerning him, and not good; and of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, who desired to inquire of the Lord before going into battle. The messenger who summoned him endeavored to persuade him to prophesy smooth things, as the prophet of Baal had done. But, with the sublime heroism of the old prophets, he answered, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will

I speak." Now in the presence of these kings, and the four hundred prophets of Baal, who were urging on the wicked Ahab to battle, he is honored with a vision of the host of God. He said to them, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and *all the hosts of heaven* standing by him, on his right hand and on his left." 1 Kings xxii, 19. So the Lord always honors his faithful servants in the time of their persecution and trial.

But still more clear and distinct was the vision which Elisha and his servant enjoyed in the beleaguered city of Dothan. The king of Syria had "sent thither horses, and chariots, and a heavy host; and they came by night and compassed the city." The servant of the man of God had risen early and gone forth, when he beheld this host compassing the city. Returning in breathless haste, frightened greatly, he said, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" But the prophet of the Lord said, "Fear not: for they that be with us *are more* than they that be with them." Then he prayed and said: "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and

behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." These "horses and chariots of fire" in their vast multitude only represented hosts by which they were guided and controlled. When the servant saw his master surrounded by such a host he no longer wondered at his calmness and composure, but shared himself in the sense of security and safety. The royal psalmist, when calling upon all intelligent beings to praise the Lord, says: "Bless ye the Lord, all ye *his hosts;* ye ministers of his that do his pleasure." And yet again, when he calls upon all things, animate and inanimate, to praise God, he says, "Praise ye him, *all his angels:* praise ye him, *all his hosts.*"

The prophet Ezekiel, in his wonderful vision, abundantly confirms the greatness of the numbers of these angelic hosts. He says: "And when they [the living creatures] went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host: when they stood, they let down their wings." Ezek. i, 24.

What a vision this of the immense multitude

of these living ones! How must the sound of the noise of their wings ever after have been ringing in his ears! Certainly, the tread of the mightiest armies, and the tramp of earth's multitudinous hosts, never produced such a noise as this.

It was given to Daniel, however, the "man greatly beloved," to have a clearer vision of their numbers than any other of the Old Testament prophets. It was in that vision in which had passed before him in one grand panoramic view the rise and fall of the mightiest kingdoms which the world has ever seen; the uprising of the kingdom of the Messiah, excelling them all in its grandeur, power, and glory, and outlasting them all in its duration; and the casting down, the vanquishment, of all the foes of "the Ancient of days." It was at the close of this vision, as he beheld the thrones of earth cast down, that he saw "the Ancient of days sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him." Then there arose before Daniel's wondering eyes a mighty

host, the number of which he vainly endeavored to compute, but which seemed to him as countless. He speaks of them as the "*thousand thousands*" who ministered unto the Lord: and as "*ten thousand times ten thousand*," standing before him. This accords with the vision of the revelator, seven hundred years afterward: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living ones, and the elders; and the number of them was *ten thousand times ten thousand*, and *thousands of thousands*." Now, right in this connection, let us again read the language of our Saviour to Peter, when in his fear and rage he was ready to draw his sword and lift up his feeble arm against those who came to take Jesus. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" And, then, let us read again the language in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that he, and the whole Church of God, are now "come to an *innumerable* company [*μυριάσιν, myriads*] *of angels*." Grouping these estimates together, we learn something of the vastness of their number, and it is perfectly overwhelming to our

minds. What, in comparison with them, are all the armies of this world!

> "Great Xerxes, world in arms,
> Proud Cannæ's host,"

dwindle into comparative insignificance. How contemptible, then, were the numbers who had come to arrest the Son of God! There were a few Roman soldiers from the temple guard, or the Castle of Antonia, present, with the rabble; but he saw "more than twelve legions of angels" awaiting simply the signal from him. The full complement of a Roman legion was six thousand men: but here are more than *twelve legions* of angels, or more than seventy-two thousand, with their horses and chariots of fire, their swords and spears, to avenge their Lord. But he would not ask it; for "how, then," could "the Scriptures be fulfilled?" How could man then be redeemed? It would have been to frustrate the whole purpose of the incarnation, the life of toil, poverty, persecution, and sorrow, and to leave humanity unransomed, for them now to come to his deliverance.

Then look at the *myriads* of angels spoken of

in the Epistle to the Hebrews. A myriad is ten thousand; but the writer of the epistle does not tell us how many myriads there are. Daniel and John tell us that there are ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Did we ever pause to compute these given numbers? Do we not know that ten thousand times ten thousand are a *hundred millions;* and thousands of thousands are *millions* more; how many, who can tell? All this, we believe, is only a glimpse of the greatness of their numbers; yet from these estimates we gather that there are almost countless millions of these heavenly hosts who wait upon the bidding of their Lord, and are employed by him in his vast operations in the realms of creation, in the plans of his providence, and in carrying out the designs of redemption. Then, when we think of the power of *one* angel, what work has been wrought by the power of his arm, we are ready to ask, What must be the power of these mighty hosts? What will be the array of power and glory "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and *all* the holy angels with him!" What comfort does this furnish

to the saints of God! Often they imagine themselves to be all alone, and unbefriended in the world; but here they learn that all these angels are interested in them. What a comfort to the ministers of the Lord Jesus, who are often faint and discouraged in their work of faith and labor of love! O that our eyes might be opened, and the vision of our faith enlarged, so that we might see the powers which are arrayed for our help, our protection, and our safety! Were this so, our hands would never hang down, our hearts would never be discouraged, and our fears would evanish as the morning mists before the rising of the sun.

But it is not merely the thought of having their presence and ministrations with us here on the earth which is source of so much comfort and joy to our hearts; it is also the hope of seeing them, of mingling in their society, of listening to their songs of joy, and learning from them the wonders of creation, of providence, and of redemption. What a company! What a society will that be! Rawson says, "One loves to dwell upon it; there is something sublime in the thought of a vast multi-

tude of intelligent and purified beings, every intellect and every heart rising in adoration to Him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." We cannot disassociate the company of the angels from the company of the redeemed. They are one company—they have one song. Well does Wesley sing—

> "Lift your eyes of faith, and see
> Saints and angels joined in one;
> What a countless company
> Stand before yon dazzling throne!
> Prostrate on their face, before
> God and the Messiah fall;
> Then in hymns of praise adore;
> Shout the Lamb that died for all."

"AND is there care in heaven? And is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures bace,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is: else much more wretched were the cace
Of men than beasts: but, O the exceeding grace
Of highest God! that loves his creatures so,
And all his workes with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skyes, like flying pursuivant,
Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant!
They for us fight, they watch, and dewly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
O why should hevenly God to men have such regard!"

—SPENSER, *Faerie Queene.*

"Aerial spirits, by great Jove designed
To be on earth the guardians of mankind;
Invisible to mortal eyes, they go
And mark our actions, good or bad, below;
The immortal spies with watchful care preside,
And thrice ten thousand round their charges glide;
They can reward with glory or with gold;
Such power divine permission bids them hold."

—HESIOD.

CHAPTER VI.

ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS?

THE guardianship and ministrations of angels are among the most delightful themes which the mind can contemplate. The manner and extent of these ministrations will, from the very nature of the case, never be fully known to us in this world. Yet, the revealed word so clearly announces *the fact*, and so repeatedly illustrates it, we cannot doubt that in a thousand ways, by us "unseen, unknown," and during the whole of our earthly pilgrimage, these ministrations are enjoyed by the "heirs of salvation." It is very probable, that in a sense all the human family, as it is redeemed by Christ, shares in these attentions, and that angels are employed in the great processes of the redemption of our world. We think that it is very safe to affirm, that every redeemed sinner, just because he is redeemed, has angelic as well as human agencies brought to bear upon him for his salvation. And we have the highest authority, even that

of the Son of God himself, for saying, that such is the interest of the angels in the salvation of sinners, that when the first tears of penitence are in their eyes, and the first prayer for pardon comes from their lips, there is joy in heaven, in their presence, and a new song and a new triumph swell over the plains of immortality. In order that there might be no possible misunderstanding concerning this, the Lord Jesus uttered it twice in one discourse, thus forever encouraging the hearts of dying men and women with the great thought that the highest orders of created intelligences in the universe have the deepest interest in their spiritual and eternal well-being. Thus, while the special visitations and ministrations of angels are enjoyed by the "heirs of salvation," yet even ungodly persons, to a certain extent, and within a limited period, are also favored with them. As to the childhood of the race, the question is settled beyond a peradventure. The Lord of the angels has said of all its members: "I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

That angelical spirits can communicate with

our spirits cannot be doubted. All admit that evil spirits have this power, and if they have it, certainly the good angels have the same power, at least, which they possess. On this subject Mr. Wesley says: "We cannot doubt that the angels know the hearts of those to whom they more immediately minister. Much less can we doubt of their knowing the thoughts that are in our hearts at any particular time. What should hinder their seeing them as they arise? Not the thin veil of flesh and blood. Can these intercept the view of a spirit? Nay,

> 'Walls within walls no more its passage bar,
> Then unopposing space of liquid air.'

Far more easily, then, and far more perfectly, than we can read a man's thoughts in his face, do these sagacious beings read our thoughts just as they rise in our hearts, inasmuch as they see the kindred spirit more clearly than we see the body." These ministrations, he also affirms, are, in the first place, to our souls. "They can, in a thousand ways, apply to our understanding. They may assist us in our search for truth, remove many doubts and

difficulties, throw light on what was before dark and obscure, and confirm us in the truth. They may warn us of evil in disguise, and place what is good in a clear, strong light. They may gently move our will to embrace that which is good, and flee from that which is ill. They may quicken our dull affections, increase our holy hope or filial fear, and assist us more ardently to love God, who first loved us."

He also avers, in the most explicit words, their ministrations to our *bodies*, "preventing our falling into dangers, delivering us out of others, although we know not often whence our deliverance comes, preserving us in sudden and dangerous falls, and ministering to our cure in the time of sickness." He adds: "How often does God deliver us from evil men by the ministry of his angels—overturning whatever their rage, or malice, or subtilty, had plotted against us! These are about their bed, and about their path, and privy to all their dark designs; and many of them they probably brought to naught by means that we think not of. Sometimes they blast their favorite schemes in the beginning; sometimes,

when they are just ripe for execution. And this they can do by a thousand means that we are not aware of. They can check them in their mad career by bereaving them of courage or strength, by striking faintness through their loins, or turning their wisdom into foolishness. And who can hurt us while we have armies of angels, and the God of angels, on our side?" *

It has been thought by some persons that every one has a guardian angel, whose special duty it is to watch over him all along through the journey of life, from the cradle to the grave. For this belief the word of God furnishes no positive proof. The idea is of Jewish origin, and is also held by some heathen writers. There are two portions of the word of God which are relied upon by the advocates of this theory to prove their position. The first is in Matt. xviii, 10, where our Saviour, in speaking of little children, says, "That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." But this passage, while it teaches that children are under the guardianship of angels,

* "Wesley's Sermons," vol. ii.

does not teach that children have each a guardian angel who particularly watches over him, or that believers have each a guardian angel who watches over him. We have no sympathy with the view of Mr. Watson on this passage, who, in order to escape the theory of individual guardianship, regards the passage as not referring to the angels at all, but only "to the disembodied spirits of the disciples themselves." According to this, the passage would read: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their disembodied spirits do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." This is a sufficient answer, we think, to his strange and unsupported hypothesis. Alford says, in his comments upon this text, that the word *αγγελοι* never has the meaning of departed spirits. The other passage referred to is in Acts xii, 15: where Peter's angel is spoken of. This, however, no more proves that Peter had a special guardian angel than it would prove that Peter had a ghost, if the servant-maid had said it was Peter's ghost. The writers merely used language which was then, according to the popular superstition

and is now frequently used in the latter sense, when we say of a person whom we think we have seen, "It was either he or his ghost." The word of God sometimes speaks of *one* angel guarding God's saints, and sometimes of a *host* who defend and protect them. Where there is no clear indication in the word of God upon these questions we do well to avoid all dogmatic utterances concerning them. It is enough for us to know, they are "*all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" and whether one, or a host, is needed, the Lord of the angels disposeth of them according to his sovereign will. The evidences of these ministrations are ample, and the illustrations and examples are multiplied in the divine word.

The earliest instance upon record of angelical guardianship is found in the case of Hagar. Driven out from her home by the jealousy of her mistress, she sought a refuge and a rest in the wilderness of Beersheba. After a little while the water in the bottle was spent, and her famished child moaned piteously for drink. At length she saw the dark shadows of death gathering over his brow, and she gave up all

hope of being able to save him. Her motherly heart could not bear the thought of seeing him die; so she laid him down under the shadow of one of the scanty shrubs of the wilderness. Then, unable to contain her grief any longer, she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept. Her cries, mingled with the dying moans of her son, touched the heart, as well as reached the ear, of God, and he sent an angel, who "called to her out of heaven," when, behold, to her joyful and wondering eyes a well of water was disclosed, from which the thirst of the child was assuaged, the exhausted bottle was again filled, and the dying boy was saved to be the father of a great nation, whose descendants, even at the present day, number one hundred and twenty millions of the world's population.

Again, we behold the exercise of this guardianship in the deliverance of Lot from the fiery storm which swept the cities of the plain. After the terrible scenes of the night were over, and when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, "Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city."

"While he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." Gen. xix, 16. For some cause he lingered. What should he do? There, near the city he was leaving, were his flocks and herds; in that city were his daughters and sons-in-law; how *could* he leave them? Besides this, there were no appearances of the threatened destruction. The morning had dawned clear and beautiful. Perhaps the rich plain of Jordan, with its doomed cities, had never appeared more beautiful to him than it did on that morning. Even after he had entered Zoar, the sun rose in brightness and beauty and flooded the whole plain with his glory.

We would not overlook the fact that Abraham not only recognized this angelic guidance in sending his servant for a wife for his son Isaac, but that he also, in a special manner, in the most crucial period of his history, enjoyed the angelic guardianship and interposition. It was in the time when, not staggering at God's promise, or faltering in his obedi-

ence to God's command, he had bound his son Isaac, his only son, whom he loved, upon the altar, and the sacrificial knife was uplifted to slay him, that the angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven and said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Again, in sending his servant Eliezer to Mesopotamia, when he asked of his master the important question, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land whence thou camest?" the aged patriarch answered, with that sublime, heroic faith which always characterized him: "The Lord God of heaven . . . he shall send *his angel* before thee." Genesis xxiv, 7. This was repeated by the servant to Nahor and his household. Verse 40. How wonderfully this faith was honored is learned from the whole narrative, as recorded in the chapter referred to.

We have already seen how the Patriarch Jacob was attended in his wilderness journey, not only by one angel, but by a heavenly

host, whom he saw thronging the vast expanse of the ladder, hovering around his weary, aching head, and who guarded his way; and that when he returned from his long banishment in Padan-Aram, and not only his own life, but also those of his wives and children were imperiled, not only an angel, but the angels of God, even two camps, or hosts, met him for his encouragement and subsequent deliverance.

As we glide along down the stream of history, we see that the next special interposition of angels is that which was enjoyed by Joshua. The moment was a critical one. Israel had passed in triumph through the waters of the Jordan on dry ground. They were now in an enemy's land. The news of this wonderful event had been quickly transmitted to "all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea; and when they heard of the passage "their hearts melted, neither was there spirit in them any more." While this consternation was upon them Joshua was commanded to circumcise the children of Israel," thus disab-

ling every man in his army, and making them a ready prey to their enemies, if they had been attacked. It is not at all improbable that so astute and able a commander as Joshua was had not been without his fears as to the results of this procedure. But in this emergency, as he was by Jericho, he "lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain [marg., "prince"] of the host of the Lord am I now come." This was wonderfully assuring to the great captain and warrior of Israel. This was not the first time that an angel with a drawn sword had appeared to defend the Israelites: for when Balaam was on his way to curse them, the angel had drawn his sword and withstood him in his pusillanimous and vacillating career. Had he then regarded the monition and turned back, he would not subsequently have been slain among the enemies of Israel, and his name would not have been held up for the execration of the ages, as a synonym of all that is base, and low, and vile.

We reserve the angelic interposition and ministration in the translation of Elijah for another chapter. But we cannot overlook an incident in his history which beautifully illustrates the subject under consideration. Elijah had just enjoyed his triumph over the priests of Baal, and had witnessed, in answer to his prayer, the clouds gathering over the parched land of Israel, and pouring their refreshing and fruitful contents upon it. But the hour of his victory was, also, the hour of his peril. For Jezebel, enraged beyond measure at the slaughter of her favorite priests, had sent a messenger to Elijah, saying: "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." An unaccountable fear and dread seems to have taken possession of him, and he arose and went for his life into the very recesses of the wildernesses of Beer-sheba, where, weary, discouraged, and heart-sick, he sat down under a juniper-tree and requested for himself that he might die; saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life: for I am not better than my fathers." Thus exhausted, he fell asleep. But while he slept

a wonderful ministration had been granted in his behalf. An angel had quietly, with noiseless tread and skillful hand, prepared his food for him; and when the meal was ready, he gently touched the sleeping prophet, and awakened him, requesting him to arise and eat. Before his wondering eyes there was not only the beautiful face and form of the angel, but he saw, also, "a cake, baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his bolster." Accepting the invitation, he rose, and ate and drank, and then "laid him down again." But he was not to rest there. For again the angel came and touched him, saying: "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." Then again "he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." This is the only recorded instance where an angel has prepared food for a saint of God. What a meal that must have been! what strength and vigor it must have imparted, when he could go in the strength of it for so many days and nights! Beautiful and blessed illustration this of angelic ministration in the humblest offices of human life. There is only

one instance upon record which surpasses this in interest and beauty. That was, when the risen Son of God himself prepared the breakfast for his weary disciples. They had toiled all the live-long night and caught nothing, But in the gray dawn of the morning, Jesus stood upon the shores of the Galilean Sea. The disciples, however, did not know that it was he until, at his bidding, they had cast the net on the right side of the ship, and made that wonderful haul of fishes. Then John's quick perception discovered that it was the Lord, and this he told Peter. This was enough for that ardent disciple; and, girding his fisherman's coat around him, he plunged into the sea and swam rapidly to the shore. As soon as the other disciples had come to the land they saw, doubtless to their astonishment, a fire of coals, "and fish laid thereon, and bread." Then the blessed Christ said, "Come and dine," and he, with his own blessed hands, served them. We have put this incident alongside of the narrative concerning Elijah, to mark the similarity between the food prepared by the angel and that prepared by the Lord of the angels. It was no cold and dry meal.

It was a cake baked on the coals in the one instance; it was fish and bread upon the hot coals in the other. We do not know whence the angel obtained the meal for the cake; or the bottle or cruse for the water; or where the Son of God obtained the fish and the bread. It is enough for us to know that thus the prophet and the apostles were fed. And for the comfort of God's saints, it is well to remember that neither the angel nor the Lord of angels has any less power now than they had then.

Let us now turn our attention to the two well-known instances of angelic guardianship recorded in the book of Daniel, which have been dwelt upon in the Church with delight and triumph in all the ages. To the general reader it would seem that the deliverance of the three Hebrew children was effected by the personal presence of Him whom *we* know as the Son of God. But the original expression here signifies simply, a son of the gods, or, as he appeared to the startled king, some divine, unearthly being, who had appeared for their deliverance. The Babylonish monarch knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ, or of the

angel of the covenant; but he supposed this wonderful being whom he saw walking with them, was more than human, and that it was by his power only that they were, or *could be*, delivered. Hence, in verse 28, he says, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent *his angel*, and delivered his servants that trusted in him." It is not improbable that these men had informed the monarch *who* it was that had so wonderfully preserved them. We know that punishment by the furnace of fire was common among the Babylonians. But never before had a doomed victim escaped. Yet now "the fire forgot its power to burn, and the lambent flames played" harmlessly around them, only burning their bonds, but leaving "no smell of fire upon them." There can be no doubt that the instrument of this deliverance was one of God's ministering angels, whose power was thus so glowingly displayed. What a glorious interposition was this! Not only does the angel walk unhurt in the fire, but those who walk with him are unharmed. No wonder that Nebuchadnezzar was filled with astonishment. No wonder that he praised the God of heaven

as above all gods, saying, "*There is no other god that can deliver after this sort.*"

The next instance referred to is that of *the Prophet Daniel.* Well known as it is, we venture to refer to it again; and, no doubt, it will continue to be repeated until the end of time. The history of Daniel is familiar to every Bible reader. His captivity, his education under the direction of the Babylonish monarch, his interpretation of dreams, his elevation to be the prime minister under Nebuchadnezzar; his retention of power during the interregnum while the throne was vacant on account of the monarch's insanity; his probable retirement for a season; his re-exaltation under Belshazzar; and his continued power under Darius, the Mede; his wonderful prophecies; and last, but not least, his deliverance from the den of lions, are matters as familiar as household words. That the being cast into the den of lions was a common mode of punishment among the Babylonians is evident from the remains of ancient sculptures found amid its ruins. One of the very few pieces of sculpture found at Babylon, represents a lion standing over the prostrate body of a man. An engraved gem,

also, represents a man combating with, or subduing two lions; and at Shus, (Susa,) not far from the tomb of Daniel, a bass-relief has been found representing two lions, each with a paw on the head of a man half naked, with his hands bound behind him.*

The only charge which the jealous courtiers of Darius could bring against Daniel was one founded on his fidelity to God. Narrowly they had watched his administration of public affairs; zealously they had endeavored to find some fault with him in regard to them; but all to no purpose. This was their last resort, and in this they were only too successful. Darius is caught in the trap so warily laid for him; and does not discover his fearful mistake until it is too late for him to do anything for the delivery of his faithful and trusted servant. The door of the lions' den is opened, and Daniel is cast into it. But never was there witnessed a more wonderful scene. The lions stand gazing with wonder at him, or they are awed by the presence of the angel sent for his deliverance. That an *angel* was employed for this purpose is acknowledged by Daniel, when

* Kitto, "Daily Bible Illustrations."

he replied to the inquiries of Darius concerning his safety. "My God hath sent *his angel*, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." What a night that must have been which Daniel spent with the lions and with the angel of the Lord! No need had the prophet to fear: for the presence of the angel banished all fear, and made that night the most memorable of all his earthly history.

There is no one of us who could have desired that the Hebrew children should be cast into the fiery furnace, or that Daniel should have been cast into the lions' den; but now that they have been there, and that the Lord, by his angels, has so wonderfully delivered them, we rejoice and give thanks to him for such amazing evidences of his presence and power. Who, among all the saints of God during the by-gone centuries, has not been made wiser and stronger, better fitted to endure trial and to overcome the world, by these instances of angelic ministrations? All praise, and honor, and glory, to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, and to the God of Daniel!

Among the catacombs of Rome no scenes

are more frequently sculptured than those we have just been considering. "The persecuted saints, who dared to encounter death and danger in their most dreadful forms rather than deny their faith, found great consolation in the remembrance of God's deliverance of his servants in the days of old. With the bloodthirsty cry of the ribald plebs of Rome—*Christiani ad leones*—still ringing in their ears, and, it may be, with the roar of the savage beasts of prey crashing on their shuddering nerves, they were sustained by the thought of the fidelity of those ancient worthies who, for their integrity to God, braved the flames of the fiery furnace and the perils of the lions' den." *

At the very dawn of the new dispensation we have furnished to us a beautiful illustration of angelical ministration. The fires of the Pentecost were still burning brightly, and under the pressure and power of the baptism of the Spirit the apostles were diligently laboring, by day and by night, in the city of Jerusalem. The grand success of the first sermon by Peter was being followed up by repeated efforts. Not only so; miraculous works fur-

* Withrow, "Catacombs of Rome," p. 296, *et seq.*

nished attestation and ocular demonstration of the authenticity of their mission and their work. The healing of the lame man by Peter and John had called the attention of the whole city of Jerusalem to the disciples of Jesus and their work, and had furnished an occasion for the apostles to utter, in the hearing of the people, another gospel sermon, and to charge the guilt of the death of Christ upon their rulers. While Peter and his fellow-apostles were yet speaking to the people, "the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached *through Jesus* the resurrection from the dead." They were arrested on the spot and put into the hold, or prison, until the next day. And yet, notwithstanding all this opposition, many believed, and the disciples, in a few days, numbered five thousand. On the day after their arrest there was a grand assemblage of "rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest." When the apostles were set before them, they were asked by what power or by what name

they had done this? And here occurred another grand opportunity to preach the Gospel. The rulers were confounded, and all they could do was to threaten the apostles and let them go. This was their *first* taste of prison life. But it was not to be their *last*, by any means. Having returned to their company and received a fresh endowment of power, they resumed their work. Miraculous works were now multiplied. The sick were brought forth into the streets, and laid on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might be cast upon them. Other cities, round about, had heard the wonderful tidings, and had "brought their sick, and those which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one." This was too much: so the Sadducees, the high-priest, and they that were with them, "were filled with indignation." The apostles were again arrested, and this time put into the common prison. Just here is where the angelical interposition occurred, and the previous recital of facts seemed to be necessary to the proper understanding of this deliverance. It was during the night following the day of their arrest and

confinement, that the angel of the Lord opened their prison doors and brought them forth, and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." How wonderful was this deliverance! How astonished were the keepers and the officers sent to bring them before the authorities when they found that their prisoners had escaped! The report which they gave adds very much to the interest of the narrative. They say, "The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within." Great as was the astonishment of the Jewish hierarchy at this report, it was intensified when one came and told them, "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people." No wonder that "they doubted of them whereunto this would grow." This command of the angel to the apostles has been beautifully paraphrased as follows: "As God has miraculously interposed for your deliverance, neither flee from the face of your enemies nor fear their utmost power. Go, stand in the temple, as you did before you were apprehended

by them, and, however offensive your doctrine of immortality and eternal life may be to those who deny the reality of a future existence, speak to the people assembling there at the hour of sacrifice and worship all the words of this life which your risen Redeemer has brought to light by his glorious gospel." Having had occasion to refer to the deliverance of Peter from prison by the power of an angel, we omit a further notice of it here, although it adds another illustration and evidence of the guardianship and power of the angels of God.

But we come now to consider the angelic interposition in behalf of St. Paul, in the perils of shipwreck which he endured. The ship in which he was being conveyed, as a prisoner, to Rome, was caught in the Adriatic sea by the tempestuous Euroclydon, and was threatened with being wrecked, and with the total loss of passengers, cargo, and crew. Driven along under bare poles, tossed by the tempest, with no light of sun, moon, or stars in many days: even after the tackling was cast overboard and the wheat unladen in the sea, all hope that they would be saved was taken away. In this terrible emergency, Paul, after long

abstinence, stood forth in the midst of them and said, "Be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." And the ground of this confidence was this: "For there stood by me this night *the angel of God*, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." And he added, with a sublime and heroic faith, "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, *that it shall be even as it was told me*." With this assurance, what to him was the raging of the wild tempest, or the rolling billows of the Adriatic, or the sunless, starless sea, or the quicksands which the captain and crew so much dreaded? From the moment when the angel spoke to him all his fears were gone, and his heart rested with the most undisturbed repose upon the promise of his God.

We have thus ranged through the divine word, gathering up the illustrations and evidences of angelic guardianship and ministrations. And although angel visits, so far as they have been visible and tangible, may seem to

have been "few and far between," yet they have occurred in sufficient numbers of instances to warrant our full belief in the revealed fact, that, multitudinous as are their hosts, they are "*all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Before closing this chapter let us notice,

1. *The fact of angelic ministration itself, is one of great interest and importance.* Amid the difficulties, dangers, perils, and temptations which surround our way, we are made painfully conscious of our helplessness and weakness. We feel, ofttimes, the need of sympathy, of help, not merely from our fellow-creatures, but especially from those beings which are of greater power and strength than we, or they, may possess. Of course, we all believe and know that *God* is the only absolute source of this strength and comfort and help which we need. We cordially believe that Jesus is our sympathizing Saviour and High-priest, who only can effectually aid us. But, as when our faith in God's presence and power is the strongest, and our trust in the Saviour as our Redeemer and High-priest is the sweetest and most confiding, and our reliance upon the almighty aid of

the Holy Spirit is the most complete, it does not make any the less welcome to us the *human* sympathies which our hearts so much crave; so these assurances do not make any the less welcome to us the comforting doctrine of the ministration and guardianship of the angels. We know that they are not omnipotent or omnipresent, but that they are *sent forth* by their Lord to give their ministrations to his people; and we receive them, and recognize them, and enjoy them in this light. But the fact that there are millions of these celestial beings thronging this earth by day and night—that they are here to minister in a thousand ways to God's saints—that whatever may be their rank and order, their wisdom and power, all are employed according to the divine will—and that, though unseen by us, they are actually present with us and always around us—is one of the most precious and inspiring upon which our minds can dwell.

2. *There can be no doubt that these angels are employed for our protection.* We think that one of the sweetest utterances ever made in this world is the following: "*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him,*

and delivereth them." Psa. xxxiv, 7. It is very rich in meaning; for the verb חָנָה, signifies, to pitch a camp; and "the Greek verb παρεμβαλλω, occurring in the Septuagint as a translation of this, is one used by the Greek writers in general to express the disposition or arrangement of an army. From this it is evident that not only the angel of the Lord, but his accompanying hosts, are near to the dwelling of the righteous; beheld only by their Maker and those who are with them, it is true, but invested with a merciful power to ward off our spiritual foes, to retard the child of God in his path until the overhanging ruin has fallen, or to hasten him along, as they did Lot and his family out of Sodom, that he may pass before it falls." *

Then, too, we have that kindred passage in the Ninety-first Psalm, "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. *For he shall give his angels charge over thee*, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest

* Rawson on the Holy Angels, pp. 77, 78.

thou dash thy foot against a stone." Even the devil knew this promise; but he took good care not to quote it as it is written. And how these promises have been fulfilled! We have already seen how they protected, and guarded, and ministered unto Jacob and Lot, the Hebrew children and Daniel, Peter and Paul. And these are only a very few of the illustrations and instances of their protecting power. How safe is that dwelling and that person around which, or whom, the angel of the Lord encampeth! No monarch, in the midst of his royal guards—no general, in the midst of his mighty army—ever dwelt, or rested, so safely as the child of God may do. Ten thousand perils and dangers are around us, part of which we see and know, but the greater part are unseen and unknown by us. There are dangers from the elements, from wicked men, and from evil spirits; the air may be laden with noxious vapors, and filled with disease; and who can tell of these and countless other perils which surround our way? But in the midst of all and through all, God's angels come to guard and defend us. Sometimes, as we have seen, it is *one* angel, as in the cases of the Hebrew children, Daniel,

Peter and Paul; sometimes it is *two*, as in the case of Lot; and sometimes, *a host*, as in the cases of Jacob and Elisha. Whatever guard is needed, God, our Father, always sends. And they are always on hand in time. No winds nor waves can delay them, or their horses and chariots of fire. No monarch, or commander, can hurry up his reserves so rapidly. No victorious general can so quickly bring up new forces to complete his triumphs. *In one night* the mountains are thronged with horses and chariots of fire around Dothan. And when they guard, what power can injure or harm? What power had the fire-storm over Lot and his family? What power had Esau and his four hundred men to harm Jacob, now that he was the prevailing Israel, and the camps of the angels were around him? What power had the Syrian host to injure Elisha, or the fire to burn the Hebrew children, or the lions to injure Daniel, or the sea to engulf Paul, or the prison to hold Peter, when thus protected?

An inquiry may be raised at this point. If such is the guardianship which the saints of God enjoy, why are they so often visited with sore trials, afflictions, calamities, persecutions,

and privations? Why have their enemies been permitted to burn them at the stake, drown them in the sea, and endungeon them in the prison? Why are they the victims of accidents, of robberies, and why are they sometimes even murdered? We cannot answer all the questionings which at times will arise in the mind of the afflicted, bereaved, persecuted, and tempted child of God: all that we can say is, that God is sometimes pleased to permit these evils for the good of his people and the glory of his name. There can be no doubt that he could, did he see that it would be for the best interests of his people, so bear them on angels' wings that they would never experience any of these evils or calamities. But we are never to forget that this is a world of discipline and trial, and that here the people of God are to be fitted and prepared for the higher ministries, perfections, and glories of the heavenly world. But even here and now, they "know that *all things* work together for good to them that love God." It is only *victors* who are crowned; it is only those who *endure* to the end who are saved. It is only in battling with our enemies that victory is se-

cured: it is only in enduring hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that we shall be rewarded at the last: it is only by suffering with Christ that we shall enjoy the glorious and unending privilege of reigning with him on his throne. Twelve legions of angels awaited only the bidding of the Son of God to come to his rescue from the traitorous and murderous bands which had him in custody; but he declined their services that he might fulfill the great purposes of his mission. So when he shrank from the cup which was given him to drink, and prayed that if it were possible it might pass from him, the Father did not answer to his thrice-repeated call. And there can be no doubt that the angels wait around the couch of the sufferer, and linger about the way of the afflicted, persecuted, tried, and troubled one, ready to give instant relief or to crush their enemies into the dust; but while they sympathize with the heirs of salvation, and would gladly deliver them, if this were the divine will, they are content to minister to them in other ways, and to aid in preparing them for the home where they will be forever free from all these sorrows, trials, and disabilities.

3. *The angels comfort, encourage, and inspire the people of God.* We are not *always*—indeed we are very seldom—conscious of the source whence these comforts come, and whence arises the inspiration, the holy courage, which is breathed into our souls in the times of trial, danger, and temptation. We shall know more of all this by and by. But we do certainly know that they have not only provided for, but spoken words of comfort to, God's people in all the ages past; and we do not believe that the character of their offices and ministrations has changed, although they do not now appear in human form, as they so frequently appeared in former periods. Did not the angel speak words of encouragement to Joshua; of inspiration to Gideon; of instruction to Manoah and his wife; of comfort and love to Daniel, to Mary in the annunciation, to the affrighted shepherds, and to the women, in the early dawn, at the sepulcher of the risen Christ? Did not angels give assurance of support to the apostles when they delivered them from prison, and to Paul in the Adriatic Sea? Aye, more than all this, did not an angel come down from heaven to give strength to the fainting Son of

God? And are we to suppose that when we are battling with our many foes, and often just ready to fall under their power, that the angel of the Lord does not breathe words of encouragement and comfort into our souls? Must we believe that when we are afflicted, persecuted, and tempted, their voice is not heard in our souls, bidding us to be of good cheer? O, as we sail over life's tempestuous sea, and for many days and nights no sun or moon or stars appear, and yawning whirlpools of despair are around us, and dark and gloomy suggestions are poured into our souls by evil spirits, is there no good angel near to lift our head and cheer our heart? "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord;" but the disciple and the servant are like their Master and Lord in many things. "He was tempted in all points like as we are." Yes, but after his fierce temptation in the wilderness did not the angels come and minister unto him? And when we are wearied after a long-continued struggle with the world and sin and Satan, and we come forth from the conflict scarred and faint and almost ready to die, will they not, do they not, come and minister unto us?

Again, Jesus had his Gethsemane, *and we have ours.* A bitter cup is often handed us to drink. We see it approaching. We feel it near. We shrink from it. We cry out in our agony, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and yet the draught is pressed to our lips, and we are compelled to drink it. It is sometimes when we see our worldly goods going away from us. It is sometimes when our good name is shadowed by the tongue of scandal, and our honor is laid in the dust. It is sometimes when an agony of suffering is upon our physical frame. And it is sometimes when nameless sorrows and trials are ours. More, perhaps, than all these, it is when we stand by the bedside of a beloved child and the death-angel is hovering near, and his dark shadow is slowly creeping over the brow and face, and our poor hearts are wrung with anguish and grief unutterable. Or it is when a dear companion or parent is about to be torn away from our side. Then our souls are exceedingly sorrowful, almost unto death, and we are just ready to faint under our burden. But we read that when Jesus was passing through the gloomy garden "there appeared

an angel from heaven strengthening him." When, therefore, we pass through our Gethsemane, there will be, we cannot doubt, an angel sent from heaven to strengthen us, and we shall be able to drink the bitter cup. So Whittier beautifully sings in his poem called "The Angel of Patience:"

"To heavy hearts, to mourning homes,
God's meekest angel gently comes.
No power has he to banish pain,
Or give us back our lost again:
And yet in tenderest love our dear
And heavenly Father sends him here.

"There's quiet in that angel's glance;
There's rest in his still countenance;
He mocks no grief with idle cheer,
Nor wounds with words the mourner's ear;
But ills and woes he may not cure,
He kindly trains us to endure.

"Angel of patience, sent to calm
Our feverish brows with cooling balm;
To lay the storms of hope and fear,
And reconcile life's smile and tear;
The throbs of wounded grief to still,
And make our own our Father's will!

"O thou who mournest on thy way,
With longings for the close of day,
He walks with thee, that angel kind,
And gently whispers, 'Be resigned!
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell
The dear Lord ordereth all things well.'"

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANGEL OF THE COVENANT.

WE think that there can be little doubt in the mind of any careful reader of the Old Testament, that when the words "the angel of Jehovah," "the angel of God," "the messenger of Jehovah," are used, they indicate to us a manifestation of God himself. And while, in the foregoing pages, we have referred to some of these portions of Scripture as illustrating and confirming the presence and ministrations of angels, still we must regard that they have a higher signification than any of which we have yet spoken. In Gen. xviii, 1, *et seq.*, we read, "And the Lord appeared unto him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day." And although it is said that there were *three men*, yet to the *one* Abraham particularly addresses himself, and *he* gives the promise to him and Sarah of a son. To him Abraham also addresses his importunate and prevalent prayer. There is, throughout, an evident dis-

tinction between him and the two angels which accompanied him. How Abraham recognized him above the other two we do not know, but he certainly did. The same thing is observed when we read, at the close of the fervent, effectual prayer of the patriarch, that "the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham." Gen. xviii, 33. And then read, in chapter xix, 1, "There came *two* angels to Sodom at even;" and in verse 13, "The Lord hath sent us to destroy" the place. These *two* are only recognized as angels in the narrative. In Gen. xvi, 7, we read of the angel of the Lord finding Hagar; but when her eyes were opened to see what would be the future of the child she was to bear, "she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." Chap. xvi, 13. So when Abraham was called to offer up his son Isaac, it is said, "The *angel of the Lord* called unto him out of heaven," and he recognized that it was God himself who was speaking to him; for he "called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh." Gen. xxii, 11, 14. When Moses had a vision of the angel of the Lord in the burning bush,

amid the dreary solitudes of Horeb, it is said, (Exod. iii, 2,) that "the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him." But in the sixth verse the wondrous Being who had thus appeared to him declares that he is "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and in the fourteenth verse he proclaims his awful name, "I AM THAT I AM." The same fact is made known to us in the appearance to Joshua at Gilgal, and to Jacob at Penuel. So we cannot doubt that this was Jehovah-Jesus. From these, and other instances which might be referred to, it has been said, "It is hardly to be doubted that these passages refer to the same kind of manifestation of the divine Presence. This being the case—since we know that 'no man hath seen God [the Father] at any time;' and that 'the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him'—the inevitable inference is, that by the angel of the Lord in such passages is meant He who is from the beginning, the Word; that is, the Manifester, or the Revealer of God. These appearances are evidently foreshadowings of the incarnation. By these God the Son manifested himself from time to time in that human na-

ture which he united to the Godhead forever in the Virgin's womb." *

In like manner Mr. Watson concludes, after a full consideration of the passages referred to, "The Jews held this Word, or Angel of the Lord, to be the future Messiah, as appears from the writings of their elder rabbins. So that he appears as the Jehovah of all the three dispensations, and yet is invariably described as a separate person from the unseen Jehovah who sends him. He was, then, the Word to be made flesh, and to dwell for a time among us, to open the way to God by his sacrifice, and to rescue the race, whose nature he should assume, from sin and death. This he has now actually effected; and the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian religions are thus founded upon the same great principles—the fall and misery of mankind, and their deliverance by a divine Redeemer." And yet again he says: "No name is given to the angel Jehovah which is not given to Jehovah-Jesus; no attribute is ascribed to the one which is not ascribed to the other; the worship which was paid to the one by the patriarchs and prophets,

* M'Clintock and Strong, "Cyclopædia," *in loco.*

was paid to the other by evangelists and apostles; and the Scriptures declare them to be the same august person, the Image of the Invisible, whom no man can see and live--the *Redeeming Angel*, the *Redeeming Kinsman*, and the Redeeming God."* Dr. Hodge also says: "As there is more than one person in the Godhead, we find at once the distinction between Jehovah as the Messenger, a Mediator, and Jehovah as he who sends; between the Father and the Son as co-equal, co-eternal persons. . . .We find throughout the Old Testament constant mention made of a person distinct from Jehovah, as a person, to whom nevertheless the titles, attributes and works of Jehovah are ascribed. In Gen. xxxii, 24–32, Jacob is said to have wrestled with an angel, who blessed him, and in seeing whom Jacob said: 'I have seen God face to face.' Hosea says: 'Jacob had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us, even Jehovah God of hosts: Jehovah is his memorial.' The angel was the Lord God of Hosts."† This is in accordance

* Watson's "Institutes." † Hodge, vol. i, pp. 485–7.

with the unanimous opinion of all antiquity. All the Church fathers—Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, and others—confirm this view.

How wonderful is the condescension which he thus manifested! Man could not see God and live. But God sends his Son, in angelic and human forms, and men behold him and live. When the great fact was made known to some of the Old Testament saints, that God had actually appeared to them, they feared lest they might die. But he did not appear to destroy men, but to save them. Does not this indicate that this world was made, and continues to exist, in view of redemption?

Hugh Miller says: "And I can as little regard the present scene of things as an ultimate consequence of what man had willed or wrought, as even any of the pre-Adamic ages. It is simply one scene in a foreordained series; a scene intermediate in place between the age of the irresponsible mammal and of glorified man; and to provide for the upward passage to the ultimate state, we know that in reference to the purposes of the Eternal, he through whom the work of restoration

has been effected is, in reality, what he is designated in the remarkable text, 'The Lamb slain from the *foundation* of the world.' First, in the course of things, man in the image of God, and next, in meet sequence, God in the form of man, have been equally from all eternity pre-determined actors in the same great scheme." *

But while the word angel, or messenger, is applied to the Son of God, it is only to designate his *office* and *work*, and not his *nature*. He is the Creator and Lord of angels, as we have already seen, and his eternal inheritance is to bear a more exalted name than theirs. The whole argument in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to show his infinite superiority to them. The Father never said to any angel, or archangel, seraphim or cherubim, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee;" and again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." His angels, "He maketh spirits; and his ministers a flame of fire;" but he saith to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou

* "The Testimony of the Rocks," p. 262.

hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And, as the crowning evidence of his supremacy, it is said, "When he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him.*"

The Book of Revelation presents before us the grand and glorious scene of all the angels worshiping him. Day and night, for ever and ever, they ascribe to him the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." While every creature "which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, exclaim, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Hence we see that, while in his infinite pity and condescension he appeared as a man to patriarchs and prophets, and then in the form of a servant to the eye of the world for thirty-three years, he is truly Lord over all, and worshiped and adored by all the heavenly hosts.

"ALL my heart this night rejoices
As I hear, far and near, sweetest angel voices:
'Christ is born!' Their choirs are singing,
Till the air, every-where, now with joy is ringing.
For it dawns, the promised morrow
Of His birth, who our earth rescues from her sorrow.
God, to wear our form, descendeth;
Of his grace, to our race, here his Son he lendeth."

—PAUL GERHARDT.

"Break forth in joy, angelic bands!
Crown ye the King that 'midst you stands,
To whom the heavenly gate expands!
Sing victory, angel-guards that wait!
Lift up, lift up the eternal gate,
And let the King come in with state!
And, as ye meet him on the way,
The mighty triumph greet and say,
Hail, Jesu! glorious Prince, to-day!
Bow before his name eternal!
Things celestial and terrestrial,
And infernal!"

—*Old Latin Hymn*,
Translated by Dr. J. M. NEALE.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANGELS AND CHRIST.

IT has been thought by many, that when man had sinned, and lost the favor of his God, the angels, in terror and alarm, as well as in loathing and celestial anger, fled from the scene of sin and ruin to their own abodes of infinite purity and bliss. We cannot doubt that while man was in paradise, a sinless being, he enjoyed the frequent visits of, and uninterrupted intercourse with, the angels. There was nothing to prevent this. They saw in him a child of God, who, although a "little lower" than themselves in the scale of being and intelligence, was, nevertheless, their brother, created in the image of God, and heir of the world. In such conditions and relations the most free and familiar intercourse must have existed between them. But when man fell, all was changed; and when God was angry with the rebellious pair, the angels sympathized with his displeasure, and discontinued their visitations and ministrations.

Soon, however, before their wondering eyes was brought to view the vast remedial scheme by which the sinner may be redeemed and the fallen may be restored. When Satan and his angels fell no scheme for their redemption or restoration was made known to them. How could they know that any would be devised for fallen *man?* How long it was before this plan was made known to the angels we cannot tell. It may have been communicated to them at the same time that it was revealed to the guilty pair. They then learned of the design of God, in his everlasting, all-embracing love, to give his Son for the salvation of the race. They heard the primal promise, that through "the seed of the woman" the "serpent's head" was to be bruised. How natural it was for them to think and feel, "If God so loves the race—if the Son of God be so interested in man, fallen and sinful although he is—certainly we also should be interested in him and help to save him." They began at once to see how that things in the heavens, and things on the earth, were to be reconciled by and through Christ, and harmony once more to be restored.

Again, at the divine command, they recommenced their visitations to man, not now as an unfallen being, but as an "heir of salvation," through the promised Christ. With what eager gaze must they have watched every step and stage in the progress of that redemptive work, bending, with steady gaze, their vast powers of celestial vision, striving to "look into these things." No wonder that in the divine plan for the erection of the mercy-seat, the cherubim were represented with outstretched wings, fixing their earnest look upon the mysteries which were merely symbolized there; and thus indicating to us their unceasing interest in the plan of human redemption. It was, also, very early revealed to the Patriarch Jacob, how that the ministries of angels were only enjoyed by him, and by a redeemed race, through Christ. The angels of God *now* only ascend and descend upon the ladder. Before, they came *directly* to man; now they come *only through Christ.* "The Scriptures teach, that it is by and through the mediation of Christ that the fellowship of the human race with other orders of beings was to be restored, and men and angels were

to be brought into association. Indeed, we know ourselves indebted to the Mediator for every blessing; if, therefore, we regard the angels as the 'ministers of God, which do his pleasure,' and through whose instrumentality he carries on designs, whether of providence or of grace, we must feel sure that we owe it exclusively to Christ that these glorious creatures are busied with promoting our welfare. And if, then, the continued descent and ascent of the angels mark, as we suppose it must, their coming down on commissions in which men have interest, and their returning to receive fresh instructions, there is peculiar fitness in the representation of their ascending and descending by a ladder, which is figurative of Christ; it is a direct result of Christ's mediation, that angels are 'ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;' and if, then, a ladder reaching from earth to heaven be a just emblem of the Saviour, it is in the nicest keeping with this emblem, that, up and down the ladder, should be rapidly passing the cherubim and seraphim." *

* Melvill's Sermons, p. 287.

We have already seen how frequent were the appearances of angels during all the work of preparation for the coming of Christ; we are now to behold them at every point in the visible processes of redemption; coming on joyful wing, joining in loudest, sweetest songs, making glad annunciations, heralding his appearance, strengthening and comforting him in his trials, proclaiming his resurrection, and, finally, in countless numbers, escorting him to his eternal home. Over each of these scenes, in which the angels took so prominent a part, we may well linger again, with delight and joy.

We begin with—

1. *The Annunciation* made by the angel Gabriel. It is well to consider here, that every thing in this annunciation of the Saviour's birth is said in the most careful and specific manner. The time, the place, the name of the angel, the name of the Virgin, of the coming Deliverer, and of his wonderful mission. Bishop Hall well says, "The Spirit of God was never so accurate in any description as that which concerns the incarnation of God. It was fit no circumstance should be omitted in that story whereon the faith and salvation of

the world dependeth. We cannot so much as doubt of the truth, and be saved. Not the number of the month nor the name of the angel is concealed. Every particle imports not more certainty than excellence. The messenger is an angel. A man was too mean to carry the news of the conception of God. Never any business was conceived in heaven that did so much concern the earth, as the conception of the God of heaven in the womb of earth. No less than an archangel was worthy to bear the tidings; and never an angel received a greater honor than of this embassage."

How beautiful and graceful was his salutation to the meek and modest Virgin! "Hail, thou that art highly favored! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women!" No wonder that at first she was troubled and perplexed by that form of address, to such a humble person as she felt and knew herself to be; and that she cast in her mind "what manner of salutation this should be." Doubtless, her beautiful face and brow were crimsoned with modest blushes, and her heart beat quick with sudden and various emotions. She may have asked herself, "What does he mean?"

"How am I highly favored of the Lord?" "How am I, only a Jewish peasant girl, blessed among women?" The angel, beholding her confusion and perplexity, came to her rescue, and said, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i, 31–33.

Her perplexity was now even greater than before, and she inquires, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" It was then that the angel revealed to her the great plan of redemption, the miraculousness of the conception, and the sinlessness of the being to whom she was to give birth. Ver. 35–37. We cannot but admire the grace, the modesty, and the submissiveness of the Virgin in her reply to all this. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." But this is not all the story. There was one

true heart which had loved her deeply, one noble man to whom she was espoused. He, certainly, had the deepest interest in this matter. He must be made to understand the wonderful design. Therefore to hush his disquietude and calm his fears, as well as to preserve in his estimation the honor of his beloved and espoused wife, an angel — was it Gabriel?—was sent to make an announcement to him in a dream, similar to that which had been made to Mary:—"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt *call his name* JESUS: for *he shall save his people from their sins.*" Wonderful, blessed utterance, this! over which the Church of God has lingered with rapturous delight for ages past, and which will furnish the theme of their delightful meditation not only through time, but, also, through eternity.

2. *Angels announce his birth.* Jesus, the promised Messiah, long looked for, long foretold, is born, born in a manger, born in Bethlehem. The angels knew it. Heaven was full of the rapturous theme and the rapturous joy.

It could not contain it longer: it was not meant that it should. Christ was born not merely nor simply for the delight and joy of the angels; but especially for *the redemption of man.* And man, the interested party, must hear the blessed tidings. But who shall bear them? And to whom shall they be borne? We know not who the honored angel was. His name is not recorded in our gospels. We shall never know who he was until we reach our heavenly home. Then we shall know him, and thank him for bringing the "glad tidings." No doubt, however, he was high among the ranks and orders of the heavenly hierarchies. For, when he appears, the glory of the Lord has so enswathed him, that it shines all around the shepherds, and bathes the plains where they pasture their flocks with its rosy light, its celestial radiance. No wonder that the shepherds were "sore afraid" at this sudden and glorious appearance: for they knew not whether he was a messenger of mercy, or a messenger of wrath. They knew that in both these ways angels had appeared in the former times. Quickly, however, their fears were quieted by the assuring voice of the angel.

"Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

But one angel is not enough. "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude o the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." No doubt these angel-chimes still linger above this world of ours. Above the din and noise, the strife and confusion, would we but pause and listen, they are still ringing out clear and full, giving, as of old, the promise of the complete redemption of our humanity and of the eternal reign of Christ.

"Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

"But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong,

And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

"And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!"

The question sometimes arises, "Of whom was that heavenly host composed?" Were they *all* angels and archangels, seraphim and cherubim? Or, were there not among them patriarchs and prophets, and priests and kings —saints of all the previous ages to whom the promise of the redemption had been made, and who had now come to rejoice in its fulfillment? We cannot tell: we dare not say. And yet, we *think* it highly probable that they *were* amid that glorious host on that bright and blessed morning. We shall *know* all about this by and by. Meanwhile, we rejoice that the Saviour is born. Immanuel, God with us, has appeared to dwell with man! He has become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

He has softened the overpowering glory of the Godhead to human gaze, by veiling it in the clouds of human flesh. *We see God—and live.*

No wonder, then, that the angel-songs filled heaven and earth, and rang through the universe. It was the only *actual* incarnation of God which had ever been made, and, in the very nature of the case, to all eternity there can be no other. This mystery we do not understand. We would not even attempt an explanation of it. We simply *believe* it, and wonder and adore. We join the angelic song, repeating joyfully its chorus, and striving to reecho its strains. We turn now to a widely different scene, and consider—

3. *The angels ministering to Christ after his temptation in the wilderness.* It does not come within the scope of this volume to enter into a discussion of the many collateral questions arising in connection with Christ's temptation. They would furnish material for a lengthened dissertation, if not for a large volume. The field is a very inviting one; but we must adhere to our original plan. We can only say, that the *place* where this temptation occurred, or, at least, where it began, may have been

either the Quarantania, or the Arabian Desert of Sinai. The *Tempter*, as many think, appeared in a human form, although others hold that it was as a spirit that he was permitted to exert his power over the Son of God. The *time* when it occurred was immediately subsequent to his baptism, when his human consciousness, probably, first awoke to the fact that he was the Son of God, in view of the Spirit descending upon him, and the voice of the Father acknowledging him as his Son. The *temptation* itself was threefold—to *distrust*, *presumptuous confidence*, and *unholy ambition*. The struggle was, probably, long and fierce. And it came upon him when he was weakened and enfeebled by his forty days' fast. Yet he overcame.

He was thus tempted that he might show to his people in the future ages of his Church that he had been tempted in all points like as they are; but that he had overcome. And that as he had overcome, so they might gain the victory over Satan and all the powers of darkness. What now particularly interests us, however, is, that when the struggle was over, and the wearied, weakened, fainting Son of God had victoriously driven his adversary from the

field, discomfited him, bruised his head, and given the signal of victory to all his hosts who should be hereafter tempted by his power, "the angels came and ministered unto him." *How* they ministered, and *what* they ministered, we know not; but the fact that they did thus minister we are most clearly informed of. It has generally been supposed that they ministered food unto him, as they had done to Elijah in the desert. How sweet, how refreshing, how strength-inspiring was that food! Elijah had gone for forty days in the strength of the food provided for him. Now the Son of God has prepared for him "a table in the presence of his enemies;" and now he eats angels' food. These celestial beings had, doubtless, watched his struggles with intensest interest. They knew, better than we can know, the powers of the lost archangel, the subtlety of the "father of lies;" and when the conflict was over, and the mightiest energies of the arch-fiend had been baffled and counterworked, they filled all heaven with their shouts of victory and triumph. "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren

is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Rev. xii, 10.

O what delightful refreshings come to the people of God after their periods of conflict and strife are, for the time, overpast! O what songs of joy and triumph burst from their lips when they have been made "more than conquerors through him that loved" them! And with what renewed strength and vigor have they pursued their way to the heavenly hills, encouraged to win fresh victories, and to gain the conqueror's crown at last!

What further concerns us in this connection is, the knowledge of the *sympathy* which our divine Lord has with us and for us, in all our struggles. The precious thought that He knows all about it, that he has passed through the strife before us, and that he overcame, has nerved the faltering arm of many a saint of God.

> "He *knows* what sore temptations mean,
> For He hath *felt* the same."

And, when heated in the strife, perhaps beginning to think that we must yield, unless help come speedily, we have cried out as in the Litany—

"By thy days of sore distress,
In the savage wilderness;
By the dread, mysterious hour,
Of the insulting tempter's power;
Turn, O turn a favoring eye,
Hear our solemn litany!"

We now approach, solemnly and reverently, *the Garden of Gethsemane.* The scene presented to us by the evangelist surpasses all power of description. The last supper was over. The farewell words, burdened with messages of love, of hope, of peace and joy to his disciples, had been spoken. He had entered with them this garden to which he had often resorted before. And now, withdrawing from them "about a stone's cast," Jesus prostrated himself upon the cold, damp ground, wet with the night dews, and prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done!" Thrice was that prayer repeated, but no answer of deliverance came. It was then, when the great burden of a world's guilt was pressing upon his heart, when he was "treading the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him"—while fainting under his grief and sorrow—that an "*angel appeared unto him from*

heaven, strengthening him." We know not what the angel said, or what he did; but we do know that he strengthened the humanity of Jesus to bear this burden of a world's guilt, and to drink this cup of suffering and of sorrow. There is large room here for our imagination and fancy to play. Very many artists have endeavored to convey their *ideals* to us upon the canvas. We have been led to view him kneeling on the ground. His eyes uplifted to Heaven for help, the great drops of sweat, discolored with blood, oozing from every part of his body; and then, an angel form by him, throwing his stalwart arm around him, and speaking words of courage and strength to him. We have sometimes imagined that we could hear him say, "Drink this cup, Son of God; drink it for the salvation of the world!"

One thing we know positively, that it was *for* "*the joy that was set before him* that he endured the cross, despising the shame." After this he resignedly and submissively takes the cup and drinks it, even to its dregs. True, the agony of his soul increases; but his strength is sufficient to endure it. "Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was

as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." It was the agony, the exceeding sorrowfulness of his soul, even unto death, that produced the blood-colored sweat. But did we ever pause to think, how calmly, after the garden agony was over, he met the traitor-headed band? how "he was led like a lamb to the slaughter; and like a sheep dumb before her shearers, so he opened not his mouth?"

Henry well remarks on this scene: "It was an instance of the deep humiliation of our Lord Jesus, that he *needed* the assistance of an angel, and would *admit* it. The influence of the divine nature withdrew for the present; and then, as to his human nature, he was for awhile *lower than the angels*, and was capable of receiving help from them. The angels ministered to the Lord Jesus in his sufferings. He could have had legions of them to rescue him; nay, this one could have done it; could have chased and conquered the whole band of men that came to *him:* and the very visit which the angel made to him now in his grief, when his enemies were awake and his friends were asleep, was such a seasonable token of the di-

vine favor as would be a very great strengthening to him. Yet this was not all. He probably *said something to him to strengthen him;* put him in mind that his sufferings were in order to his Father's glory, to his own glory, and to the salvation of those who were given him, representing '*the joy set before him;*' with these and the like suggestions, he encouraged him to go on cheerfully; and what *is comforting, is strengthening.* Perhaps *he did something to strengthen him.* Wiped away his sweat and tears, perhaps ministered some cordial to him, as after the temptation; or, it may be, took him by the arm, and helped him off the ground, or bore him up when he was ready to faint away; and in these services of the angel the Holy Spirit was *putting strength into him,* for so the word signifies."

The scenes of the garden can never be forgotten; and the fact of the angel's presence is inseparably associated with those scenes. It is to Gethsemane we look in our darkest hours. It is from the sufferings of the Saviour there, and the strength imparted to him, that we learn to suffer and grow strong; not by any inherent strength in ourselves, but by the help

which the Lord sends us by his angels. Well may we then say:

"Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with him one bitter hour;
Turn not from his griefs away,
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray."

—MONTGOMERY.

And,

"O generous love! that he, who smote
In Man for man the foe,
The double agony in Man
For man should undergo;

"And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach his brethren, and inspire
To suffer and to die."

—J. H. NEWMAN.

But the agony of the garden and the death of the cross are now past, and we come to behold more joyous scenes, and to witness the grandest triumphs of our Lord, in which the angels are permitted to take part—namely, that of his resurrection, and that of his ascension into heaven. And, first, let us consider the part which the angels took in,

1. *The resurrection of our Lord.* The period for the foretold resurrection had now arrived. For parts of two days, and the whole of one,

he had lain in the sepulcher. That precious body, marked by the sweat of blood, torn by the nails, pierced by the spear, and marred by the crown of thorns, had quietly slept in the rocky tomb of Joseph. But at length the resurrection morn had dawned upon the world, and the mighty Jesus gave to it an illustration and a demonstration of a resurrection from the dead which was to confirm his claims to the divine Sonship, and declare him to be "the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness." With the events preceding, accompanying, and following the resurrection of Christ all are familiar. The earthquake; the angel descending from heaven, rolling back the stone, and sitting upon it; the brightness and glory of his countenance, the luster of his raiment, the youthfulness of his face and form, the terror which his presence and glory inspired, causing even Roman veterans to fall to the ground as dead men, and the words of cheer which he spoke to the women, we are all familiar with, having heard of these things from our earliest days. It has been well said, "Angelical beings, by their dazzling brightness, overcame

the strongest hearts of military men. Martial courage, which could brave danger and death in every form, fails in their presence." Of this angel of the Lord it is said, "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men." "Lightning dressed in snow is the best expression which human language can furnish, to describe the appearance of an inhabitant of heaven. Manoah, Daniel, and other holy men of God, have been overwhelmed by the splendor of angels. We cannot wonder, then, that heathens near a sepulcher, while they were fainting with terror from the earthquake, should tremble at the sight of an angel, whose raiment was dazzling white like lightning. All considerations of military duty and responsibility vanished from their minds, at the celestial vision; and the prostrate condition of those dreaded Roman warriors illustrates the words of the psalmist: 'The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.'" * The accounts given by the

* Timpson: "Angels of God," p. 430.

evangelists vary somewhat from each other; but it is only from their different stand-points, and at the different periods to which they refer. For instance, Mark says that there was "*one* angel, *sitting* on the right side of the sepulcher, clothed in a long white garment." Luke speaks of *two standing* by the affrighted women, in "shining garments." John says that Mary Magdalene saw, as she looked into the sepulcher, *two angels* in white, *sitting*, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." These accounts all agree in the following particulars: that these were angelical appearances; that an angel rolled away the stone; that the angels announced the fact of Christ's resurrection; that they endeavored to comfort the women; and that they gave to them important directions. That sometimes only *one* angel is spoken of, and at others *two*, is nothing against the gospel narrative; for, doubtless, there were multitudes there, each anxious to have some part in the glorious event, while only a few were permitted to make themselves visible to the disciples. The apostles themselves were not permitted to see even *one* angel. This honor was reserved for

the faithful women, who were "last at the cross and earliest at the tomb."

This resurrection of Christ must have been witnessed with rapturous joy by the angels. More than twelve legions of them had lingered near when he was arrested and arraigned; but were not allowed to interfere. Now, however, the scene is changed. Their Lord is risen. Sin, the world, death, and hell are conquered. Now they can come and exult in the wondrous triumph, and take some part in the scenes connected with it. Vain to them were the guard, the stone, the seal; vain was the power of death and the grave to their conquering Lord. He rises! and his resurrection fills heaven and earth with gladness and joy.

"The shining angels cry, 'Away
With grief; no spices bring;
Not tears, but songs, this joyful day
Should greet the rising King!'

* * * * * *

"Victor o'er death and hell,
Cherubic legions swell
The radiant train:
Praises all heaven inspire;
Each angel sweeps his lyre,
And claps his wings of fire,
Thou Lamb once slain!"

We now come to behold *the angels at the ascension of our Lord into heaven.* Forty days had passed since he arose. The time had come for him "to ascend up where he was before" his incarnation. Immense preparations had been made for his formal entrance into his eternal home, and his inauguration as the High-priest and King of the Universe. On the morning of that bright day "he led his disciples out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." Another, and a more extended account, by the same author—at once evangelist and historian, —says that, after he had given to his disciples the promise of the Spirit, to empower them to be witnesses, both of his death and resurrection to the uttermost part of the earth, as well as in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, "While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Very naturally their eyes followed him intently, as they saw him, contrary to the law of gravitation, rising up from the earth and ascending toward heaven. It was while they were thus stead-

fastly looking toward heaven, after the vanishing form of their Lord, that "two men stood by them in white apparel: which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Who were these men in white apparel? To our mind they were angels who had tarried behind the vast cavalcade of cherubic legions who were escorting the risen Lord into heaven. But what was that *cloud* which had received him out of their sight? The sacred writers do not inform us whether it was a "bright cloud," such as overshadowed the Mount of Transfiguration; or, a dark cloud, such as hung over Mount Sinai, cleft ever and anon by lightnings and quivering with thunders. We are simply left to conjecture the form and shape and color of this cloud. And yet, as to its component parts, we have, so we think, little room for doubt. The word of God gives us to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ was escorted to his native home by a vast multitude of angels. Now we believe, that if that cloud could have been penetrated by some celestial

telescope, it would have revealed an innumerable company of angels, with horses and chariots of fire, who had come as the escort to accompany *their* Lord and *ours* to his eternal abode. As the one angel was the herald of the heavenly host on the day of his birth, so the two are now a part of the rear-guard on the day of his ascension. Just like the Magellanic clouds, Nubecula Major and Nubecula Minor, under the powerful glass of the astronomer, have resolved themselves into vast accumulated masses of stars, or clusters of stars, as well as nebulæ of different magnitudes and different degrees of condensation, so this cloud of glory, perhaps "dark with excessive light," was only the enswathement which concealed from mortal view the glorious retinue which attended the Son of God on that glad day. Some angels came to conduct the deathless prophet home; may we not truly say, multitudes came to escort their Lord and Master? There can be no doubt that the psalmist foresaw in vision, His great ascent, and his triumphal entry into his glory. As he thus observed the vast throng approaching the gates and walls of the eternal city, aflame with jasper and glittering with

pearls, he heard their cry, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Those inside the gates respond, "Who is this King of glory?" And the answer is returned, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Again they cry, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Once more they ask from within, "Who is this King of glory?" Once more the answer is returned, "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." It was enough. The gates were lifted up, the everlasting doors opened, *and the King of glory entered in.* Thus he "ascended upon high, leading away a multitude of captives, and receiving gifts for men; yea, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Thus has he sat down on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, "from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." The heaven of heavens had never witnessed such a scene of triumph before; it was the inauguration day of the King of kings; it was the grand welcome of the God-man; it was the tri-

umphal entrance of the Lord of glory into his eternal home.

There, seated by the right hand of the Father, he is worshiped and adored by all the angelic hosts, and "the number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," who say "with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing," while the universe responds to the song, and re-echoes its wonderful strains. Thus, we have seen these celestial beings ministering unto their Lord through all his wondrous life; at his resurrection and ascension; and now forever adoring him before his throne. Were there no other evidence of his divine character but that which the proof of their worship and adoration affords, this alone would be sufficient. For it must be supposed that they all know him—know that he is God alone; or else, we should be driven to the alternative, that, in worshiping him, they are idolaters: a conclusion too monstrous for any person to believe. We can well say then, in the triumphant words of the Christian poet—

"Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious,
See the Man of sorrows now;
From the fight returned victorious,
Every knee to him shall bow:
Crown him, crown him;
Crowns become the Victor's brow.

"Crown the Saviour, angels, crown him:
Rich the trophies Jesus brings:
In the seat of power enthrone him,
While the vault of heaven rings:
Crown him, crown him;
Crown the Saviour King of kings.

—THOMAS KELLY.

Has it ever occurred to the reader what joy and satisfaction it will give to redeemed souls to see and converse with those angels who bore so conspicuous a part in ministering to their Lord and Master? How delightful, when we arrive in that heavenly country, to have our angel guide inform us, as he points to one after another of the angel throng, "That is Gabriel, who made the annunciation of the Saviour's birth;" "Those are the angels who ministered to him after his temptation; that is the angel who strengthened him in the garden;" and "Those are the angels who appeared at his resurrection!" How will we seek to know them, to talk with them, and hear of the de-

light and joy with which they thus attended him in all these eventful periods! While the Lord Jesus Christ himself will be the cynosure of all eyes, and the joy of all hearts, we cannot doubt that communion with redeemed and angelic spirits will form no small part of the bliss and happiness of the heavenly world. The thought of this, even now, is rapturous and inspiring. But "what will it be to be there?"

"THE infernal serpent: he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory 'bove his peers,
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms."

—MILTON.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FALLEN ANGELS.

NO one who believes in the word of God, can possibly doubt the existence of fallen angels. *When* they fell, and *how* they fell, we may not know; but *the fact* that beings once angelic in purity, power, and bliss have fallen from this, their "first estate," is clearly revealed. Their existence, their personality, their power, their numbers, their character, their employment, and their final and everlasting abode, are frequently spoken of in the word of God. It has often been a very popular thing, among certain classes of the community, to ridicule the idea of the existence of these beings; to laugh in scorn, derision, or mockery, at those who believe in their existence; and to regard such persons as imbeciles, ignoramuses, fanatics, or fools. Let it be understood, then, at the very outset of this discussion, that all such persons will be under the necessity of giving up the word of God, and of trampling its teachings under their

feet. But in doing this, while they might blot out the evidence of their existence, they would also blot out the only hope of immortality and eternal life. The existence of a *personal devil* is spoken of as positively, though not as frequently, as is the existence of a personal God. And all the torturing of those passages by those who would prove his nonexistence, or the toning them down to signify a mere mythological something, or some impersonal evil or principle, has failed, and must, from the very nature of the case, forever fail. So long as God's word remains, the fact of the existence of "the devil and his angels" must be acknowledged.

The Son of God, speaking of the fall of Satan, says: "He was a murderer from the beginning, *and abode not in the truth*, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John viii, 44. What is the teaching of this passage? Evidently, that the one who is now called "the devil" was *once* "in the truth;" that "he abode" in that truth for a time; that the truth was "in him;" but that "he abode not" permanently and contin-

uously "in the truth;" and that now he is no longer in the truth, but a "liar, and the father of it," and is, also, "a murderer from the beginning" of time. And this, mark, is the testimony of Christ, the Creator and Lord of the angels, who had witnessed the revolt of Satan and his angels against God, his departure from truth, purity, and goodness, and his absolute abandonment to evil and sin, with all their fearful and irremediable consequences. In like manner, and with all his terse, nervous forcefulness, Jude says, "The angels which kept not their first estate," or principality, "but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Verse 6. Here the angels referred to were originally a "principality." This, for some cause, which we learn elsewhere, they did not "keep." They also had a habitation in heaven, or in the heavens, which they left or were forced to leave. And these same angels are now in "everlasting chains under darkness," condemned, lost, without hope of mercy or pardon. St. Peter also tells us, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and deliv-

ered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Pet. ii, 4; see also 1 Tim. iii, 6; Heb. ii, 14.

Many have been the conjectures as to *the cause* of their fall, some of them seeming to be reasonable and in accordance with the general teaching of the divine word, while others are most unfounded vagaries. The three most commonly assigned causes for their fall are pride, insubordination, treason. How these *could* arise in the breasts of pure, holy, untempted beings we do not know. That they did arise and were manifested are presumably the facts in the case. Some of the wisest and ablest divines have regarded that there is undoubted allusion to the fall of Satan and his angels in the account of the fall of Nebuchadnezzar. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Isa. xiv, 12–14. Ezekiel, in

his vivid description of the King of Tyre, has evidently this fearful fact before his eyes. Ezek. xxviii, 12–18. President Edwards has given a most clear and exact analysis of this passage, which we quote entire, because of its bearing upon this question. "1. He is expressly called an angel, or cherub, once and again, verses 14, 16. And is spoken of as a *fallen cherub*. 2. He is spoken of as having been in heaven under three different names; by which names heaven is often called in Scripture, namely, *Eden*, *the garden of God*, or the paradise of God, ver. 13; the *holy mountain of God*, vers. 14, 16; and *the sanctuary*, ver. 18. 3. He is spoken of as having been in a most happy state in the paradise of God, in great honor, and beauty, and pleasure. 4. He is spoken of as in his first estate, or the state wherein he was created; as being perfectly free from sin, but afterward *falling by sin*, verse 15: 'Thou wast perfect in thy ways, from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.' 5. The iniquity by which he fell was *pride*, or his being lifted up by reason of his superlative beauty and brightness, verse 17: 'Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty. Thou hast cor-

rupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.' 6. He is represented as being cast out of heaven, and cast down to the earth for his sin, verse 16: 'Therefore I will cast thee, as profane, out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the flames of fire.' Ver. 17: 'I will cast thee to the ground.' 7. He is represented as being destroyed by fire here, in this earthly world, ver. 18. 8. His great wisdom is spoken of as being corrupted by sin, that is, turned into a wicked craftiness, ver. 17: 'Thou had corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.' If the King of Tyrus were not here expressly called *a 'cherub' in the paradise of God*, and *in God's holy mountain*, by which it is most evident that he is spoken of as a type of a cherub in the paradise of God, yet the matter would have been very plain; for the things here spoken of cannot be applied to the King of Tyrus with any beauty in any other way than as a type of the devil, who was once a glorious angel in paradise." *

Again, Dr. Dwight says: "That pride and ambition were especially the sins by which Sa-

* Edwards: "Works," vol. i, pp. 698, 699.

tan and his companions fell, is, I think, sufficiently evident from 1 Tim. iii, 6, where St. Paul, speaking of a bishop, says, 'He must not be a novice—a new convert—lest, being puffed up with pride, *he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*' In this passage it is plainly asserted that the devil was condemned for his pride, and it is fairly presumable that the same sin was the source of condemnation to his associates. The revolt appears to have been but one; to have existed at one time; and to have united those who shared in it in the same guilt, as well as in the same undertaking." *

In this view nearly every great divine is agreed. These fallen angels are of various ranks and orders, but they are all marshaled under one great leader. These orders and ranks are referred to by the apostle in Eph. vi, 12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits] in high [or heavenly] places." They are also referred to by the same apostle in Rom. viii, 38: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor

* "Theology," vol. i, p. 323.

life, *nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,* shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Certainly *evil* angels are here referred to, also evil principalities and powers, as *good* angels would not labor for this purpose. Thomas Aquinas—the "angelical doctor"—supposes that some of all the orders of angels fell. The number that fell was, doubtless, very great. Mr. Wesley says: "Their number God alone can tell; doubtless it was only less than infinite. And a third part of the stars of heaven the arch rebel drew after him." *

> "They throng the air, they darken heaven,
> And rule this lower world."

As to the *time when they fell* very many writers, and Mr. Wesley among the number, suppose it was when God published the decree (mentioned Psa. ii, 6, 7) concerning the rule of his Son over all creatures, these first-born of creatures then gave place to pride, comparing themselves to him. Satan may then have given way to the thought arising within him, "I, too, will have my throne. I will sit upon the sides of the north. I will be

* "Sermons," vol. ii, p. 140.

like the Most High." So Milton sang of this event:

> "Satan, (so call him now, his former name
> Is heard no more in heaven;) he of the first,
> If not the first archangel, great in power,
> In favor and pre-eminence, yet fraught
> With envy 'gainst the Son of God, that day
> Honored by his great Father, and proclaimed
> Messiah, king anointed, could not bear
> Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impaired.
> . . . He resolved
> With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
> Unworshiped, unobeyed, the throne supreme,
> Contemptuous!"

There is one of their number, "the archangel ruined," who is the head, the prince, the leader of these fallen beings. He is called by various names and titles, as Satan, the Devil, Beelzebub, the Dragon, the Old Serpent, Traducer, Wicked One, God of this World, Prince of the Power of the Air, Prince of this World, Accuser of the Brethren, Tempter, Adversary, the Enemy, Belial, Abaddon, Apollyon. All these appellations are employed to designate the same person, and to indicate his nature and the character of his work. "The Scriptures make a distinction between Διαβολος and δαιμων, which is not observed in the En-

glish version. In the spiritual world there is only one διάβολος, (devil,) but there are many δαιμώνια, (demons.)" * "Diabolos is the Greek translation of Satan in various passages of the LXX.; for instance: Zech. iii, 1, 2; Job i, 6, 7, 12. In Eph. iv, 27, and vi, 11, the arch-enemy is called the devil, (διάβολος,) but in Rom. i, and 2 Cor. i, and 2 Thess. ii, 9, he is called Satan, (Σατανας.) Eight times in all. In 1 Tim. both words are used, which is the usage of Matthew, Luke, and John. In 2 Tim. and Titus diabolos, or devil, only occurs. Satan is a Hebrew word, meaning adversary, and was, doubtless, the word Paul used in addressing his countrymen; but, in addressing Gentiles, he would naturally use Diabolos, a Greek word, meaning slanderer. Now as the Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed to Gentiles, it is highly proper that the latter word should be employed." †

It is well said by Dr. Hodge, "that the opinion that the doctrine of Satan was introduced among the Hebrews after the exile, and from a heathen source, is contrary to the plain teachings of the Bible. He is represented as

* Hodge, vol. i, p. 643.

† Harman's "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures," p. 606.

the tempter of our first parents, and is distinctly mentioned in the Book of Job, which was written long before the Babylonish captivity." With these general facts before us, let us now consider more particularly—

1. That the devil is a *personality*, and not a *personification*. It has been argued by many that the words employed to designate the arch-fiend are merely intended to personify evil—evil desires, depravity, wicked thoughts and feelings; while the very idea of his personality has been laughed to scorn by rationalists and skeptics of every grade. But every form of expression employed by writers in every age to designate and denote personality has been used in speaking of him. So true is this, and he is so constantly represented as a personality, or personal being, that the notion of his being only a personification of evil is utterly irreconcilable with the plainest teachings of the word of God. The personal pronouns he, his, him, himself, whom, are all employed in the Scriptures, when speaking of his existence, his character, and his work. In the account of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, it is said, (Matt. iv, 3,) "When the tempter came to him,

he said." In the account of the final judgment, given by Christ, and in the sentence pronounced against the wicked, it is said: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and *his angels*." He also said, in speaking of the devil, "*He* was a murderer from the beginning. When *he* speaketh a lie, *he* speaketh of *his* own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John ix, 44. Paul, writing to Timothy of certain perverse ones, says, "That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by *him* at *his* will." So in the letter to the Hebrews it is said, "That Christ might destroy *him* that had the power of death, that is, the devil." St. Peter says, "The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom *he* may devour, *whom* resist steadfast in the faith." The word "himself" is used of Satan in Mark iii, 26; Luke xi, 18; 2 Cor. xi, 14.

Not only so, the definite article is always applied when speaking of him, as *the* devil. Let any one then try any of the interpretations which some have claimed that the word devil or Satan may mean, and they will at once see the absurdity of them. As an illustration of

this take the following: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment prepared for *evil desire and his angels.*" Or, your wicked thought, or feeling, or principle, goeth about seeking whom *he* may devour—*whom* resist. All similar interpretations will be found to be equally ridiculous. We cannot conceive, indeed, of any clearer language which the inspired writers could have employed to designate the personality of this adversary of God and man.

2. *His purpose in this world is to overthrow the worship, the law, and the authority of Jehovah.* To accomplish these purposes all his mighty powers are employed, and all the legions of hell are in hearty sympathy and union with him. No sooner were the newly-created pair placed in paradise than he began his work of deception and lies, in which he was only too successful. God had forbidden them to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, assuring them, that the day they should eat of it they should surely die. But the devil, in his inveterate opposition to God, said to them: "Ye shall *not* surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall

be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." He thus gives the lie directly to God, and charges him with intentionally deceiving them, while he plies his deceptive arts, and seduces them from their allegiance to their Creator. Thus seduced, they fell. But immediately the promise of a Redeemer was given, who should bruise his head, although, in the conflict, his own heel would be bruised. Here was inaugurated the long strife which all the past ages have witnessed, and which will be continued until the day of final doom.

A system of sacrifices, based upon the promise of the coming Deliverer, was now ordained, and a way of approach for man to God revealed, notwithstanding his fallen condition. Then Abel offered his sacrifice, and men began to call upon the name of the Lord. But at once Satan began his work of opposition to God's plans. First, Cain was influenced to bring his deistical offering of merely fruits of the field, or products of the earth, without any reference to the sacrifice which God had probably required. And because of its non-acceptance, and the acceptance of the offering of Abel, the mind of Cain

was inflamed with anger and jealousy, and he rose up and slew his own brother, the "righteous Abel." How far this antagonism of Satan developed itself before the flood is evident, when we consider that men, under his influence, became so corrupt and wicked that God destroyed them from off the face of the earth.

Subsequently to this, *idolatry* began to develop itself in the earth. This was the devil's great counterfeit of God's worship and service, and nearly the whole world accepted it instead of the true worship. Every object was worshiped, from the sun and moon and stars in the heavens, to beasts, reptiles, and even vegetables of the earth. Images of the gods in gold, silver, wood, and stone were made by men; temples were erected for their worship, sacrifices were offered to them, priests were consecrated to their service, and the world resounded with the false, idolatrous worshipings.

All this was in opposition to God—was Satan's grand device to keep men from God, and seduce them from his worship. They might have known the worthlessness of those systems, and might have learned their obligations to the true God. "For the invisible things of

him, from the creation of the world, were clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." Rom. i, 20. But "they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." Ver. 23. In Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece, Rome, India, China, Africa, Britain, Gaul, and the islands of the sea, idolatry became firmly established in the progress of the ages. These idols were demons, according to the word of God, and the title which the pagans gave to the objects of their worship. So Paul says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, [δαιμονιος,] and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons." He also calls these idolaters atheists, in Eph. ii, 12, where he says that they are "without God [ἄθεοι, atheists] in the world." They rejected the idea of God as the Creator, as Eternal, as the Living God, and worshiped the *creature* rather than, and more than, the *Creator*. "The heavens, that is, the sky, the atmos-

phere around us, they worshiped under the titles of Zeus or Dis; of Jupiter, or Jove; and (among the Canaanites and Babylonians) of Baal, Bel, or Belus. They worshiped the earth also under the title of Demeter and Cybele, called by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors Hertha, (whence our words "earth" and "hearth,") and by them most especially venerated. The pagans also worshiped the sea, under the title of Neptune; the sun, under that of Phœbus, or Apollo; and the moon, under that of Diana. These last they called the son and daughter of Jove.* So true is it what Milton says of the idolatrous throng, "And devils to adore for deities."

One small nation was chosen out of the world to be the depositary of God's truth and worship; but how often, during the nine hundred years of their dwelling in the land of Canaan, before the Babylonish captivity, were they seduced from the worship of Jehovah to that of the idolatrous worship of the surrounding nations; until, at last, wasted and enfeebled, they were led captives into Babylon, where they remained for seventy long years; and the

* Whateley p. 83.

ten tribes previously carried into Assyria were largely blotted out of the history and nationality of the Jewish people.

The *names* of these idols even are too numerous to be mentioned here—Moloch, Chemosh, Baal, and Ashtaroth, Thammuz, Dagon, Osiris, Isis, Orus, and all the thirty thousand divinities of Greece and Rome. But, no matter by what name they were called, or with what rites they were worshiped, all were designed to draw men from God to Satan, and to substitute demon-worship for the worship of Jehovah. And now, at the close of six thousand years, after all the mighty agencies which have been employed for their overthrow, and after the mightiest and most splendid of these systems have been overthrown, still there are in existence systems of idolatry in India, China, Japan, Africa, and some of the islands of the sea, which hold under their sway nearly three fourths of the fourteen hundred millions of our globe. Truly Satan is well called "*the god* of this world," and the powers under him "*the rulers* of the darkness of this world." We cannot conceal it from ourselves, if we would, that although eighteen centuries have passed

since the cross was upreared on Calvary, yet to this hour the very large proportion of this world is under the dominion of Satan. Why this has been permitted so long we cannot tell. God will, sooner or later, make all this plain to us; although, to our poor, short-sighted minds this is often occasion of wonderment and alarm.

But heathen idolatry is only one of the counterfeits which Satan has employed to deceive mankind. Christ came into the world and died to redeem and save it. He arose from the grave and ascended to heaven, and from his throne poured forth the Holy Spirit. Thousands were converted on the day of Pentecost, and tens of thousands during the first century. Heathen temples were largely deserted, sacrifices were brought no more, and multitudes of priests forsook their altars and shrines. All over the vast Roman empire men were wearied with the devil's counterfeit, and sick and tired of idolatry. The banner of the cross was carried every-where in triumph, until at length it floated from the throne of the Cæsars. And now appeared another deception. Christ has his Church, *and the devil will have his.* First he rent and tore the true Church with divis-

ions, dissensions, heresies, and schisms; then dazzled it with worldly, ambitious plans and projects; until, finally, there was born out of its corruptions the great "mystery of iniquity," "Babylon," the Church of Rome, the "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth!" Satan set up on its throne one who claims to be the vicegerent of God upon earth, and who claims that his Church is the only true Church, and all must come into it if they would be saved. No longer was heard the grand old evangel, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," but, "Believe the Church," "Obey the Church," and thou shalt be saved. And for centuries the world has wandered after this "Beast." Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers submitted tamely to his authority, and placed their necks under the feet of its insolent pontiff, "who . . . as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. ii, 4. Thus for twelve hundred years this system of iniquity has been at work in the world. Not only so. This apostate Church has become a great *persecuting system*, and has hunted down, imprisoned, exiled, endungeoned, burned, beheaded, and

butchered men, women, and children in millions, simply because they have believed God's word and clung to the simple, precious truths of the Gospel in opposition to the dogmas and "old wives' fables" which it has held. It has reared the dark walls of the inquisition, the most cruel and abominable system of persecution the world ever saw, and through its dark and dismal agencies *countless thousands* have been mercilessly put to death. At the same time its corruptions, abominations, and impurities have been such as to astonish the world, and darken the very heavens. Its great power has been employed to crush men, to keep them in ignorance, blindness, superstition, and idolatry; and as the climax of its idolatry has worshiped Mary as "the mother of God," and the pope as the "infallible Lord God!" It has taught men that they can, by their manipulation of the bread of the sacrament, transmute it into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Christ. What the heathen regarded as the very climax of all abominations even to think of, namely, that a man can eat his god, they believe they do every time they partake of the mass. It has instituted a form of idolatry as

sensuous and degrading as was that of the worship of Venus, in the worship of Mary, giving to her more worship, really, than to the Father and the Son. And, in order that it may the more effectually keep its votaries in blindness, it has forbidden them to read the word of God, and thus has shut out the light of heaven from their souls.

Now that this is the devil's counterfeit of the Christian religion we cannot doubt. No more certainly was idolatry his invention in the old world and in the pre-Christian era, to keep men from the worship of the true God, than Romanism is a counterfeit of a pure and holy Christianity.

As the ages have passed away and new developments of the work of God have been made, we see clearly how Satanic agency has striven to counteract them. When the Reformation, under Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingle, Farel, Knox, and Calvin, was inaugurated, in its first grand and mighty movements it threatened the complete overthrow of the kingdom of the Beast. But right in the midst of these splendid operations the Jesuits were raised up, doubtless through Satan's agency. Their character and

movements, more fully than any other scheme which he ever devised, are also a more complete reflex of his own image and likeness. The subtlety, machinations, unprincipled conduct, cruelties, disregard of all truth, utterances of all lies, when by this they think the interests of Rome can be best subserved, all show that their origin is to be traced to the malignity and the hellish determination to keep men from "the truth as it is in Jesus." Nor can we overlook, in this category, his efforts in other Churches, not Romanistic in name, where the evidences of his working are clearly visible. Ritualism is another great counterfeit of spiritual religion. And the formalism, worldliness, covetousness, indifference, corruption, and abominations in other Protestant Churches are akin to the same spirit of antichrist, and will, sooner or later, fall under the same condemnation. All these things effectually keep the minds and hearts of the people from Christ, and from that pure, spiritual religion which he came upon the earth to establish.

Nor can we fail to see the cunning and intrigue of the old serpent in the *intoxicants*

which are employed among the nations. In all ages of the world these have been employed in connection with the kindred vices of licentiousness, gaming, and blasphemy, to bondage the minds of men, to inflame their passions, and to make them the more obedient subjects of his kingdom and rule. These vices, parent in character as they are, have probably ruined more souls than all others united. And, especially within the boundaries of Christendom, Satan has skillfully employed them to keep men from God and from heaven. Countless thousands, from year to year, are going down to the drunkard's grave and the drunkard's hell, while the miseries, the sorrows, the woes, the bloodshed, the widows and orphans made by them, no mind can conceive and no language describe. Were it not for these vices, so inseparably interlinked together, the Christian Church to-day would be able to go forth to the speedy conquest of this world for Christ.

Infidelity is another agency of Satan. Not content with *counterfeiting* religion, he has led many to *deny* its reality and truthfulness—to deny God, Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the sanctity of the Sabbath—and thus to over-

throw the kingdom of God in the world. All along the ages, in one form or another, he has plied this agency. He has led many fools to say in their hearts, "No God." And from this boldest, baldest form of atheism, down through all deism, materialism, pantheism, Arianism, and Universalism, he has exerted his power to keep men from the truth. Sometimes these systems have been loud and boastful in their denunciations and purposes; as in the instances of Voltaire, Rousseau, d'Alembert, Hume, Bolingbroke, and Thomas Paine. At others wily, insidious, plausible, as in the rationalism of Strauss and Hegel, and the scientific infidelity of Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, and Darwin. Sometimes this has been presented to the world in large treatises and with the show of great learning; at others, with ribald and blasphemous utterances, in subtle doubt injected into unwise and unwary minds, in philosophic and scientific forms, and in downright denials of truth. Thus, in a thousand forms, has "the god of this world blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

As further evidence of Satan's existence and power, his strategy and his malice, look at the various ways in which he has attempted to crush out God's truth from the world. By means of false prophets, witches, wizards, necromancers, thaumaturgists, magicians, and, in these latter days, by modern spiritualism—one of the greatest deceptions ever practiced upon the human mind. These things, while they endeavor to contravene God's authority, and also to substitute something else for God's truth, have denied the fundamental teachings of his word, denounced the great sacrificial offering of Jesus Christ, and the Church which "he purchased with his blood," and scouted the idea of a future state of punishments, and the existence of a personal devil. In like manner, may we not trace to his agency the wars, bloodshed, divisions, dissensions, strifes, murders, robberies, thefts, adulteries, extortions, frauds, deceptions, and cruelties which are so frequent in the world. True, we learn that they proceed from the "lusts" of men, "out of their hearts;" but are they not instigated, suggested, or dictated by him?

All this, we know, is a dark picture of Satan's

reign in this world. But the picture is not, certainly, overdrawn. The facts recorded upon the page of history, the occurrences which are daily registered in the press, or which come under our own observation or experience, all demonstrate the truthfulness of these statements. These things are in the world. They cannot be denied. If there is not a Satanic, a demoniacal, agency at work in producing them, then we must believe that multitudes of men and women are themselves demons.

But, while all these things are visible in the world at large, there are other evidences of his devices, his malice and rage, in *the temptations* with which every true child of God is assailed. We have seen how he tempted the Son of God to do the worst thing which could possibly be done, namely, to fall down and worship him. So, ofttimes, his own children are tempted. The holiest, the wisest, and the best of men and women have been tempted to do the worst and the wickedest things. Under these temptations very many have fallen—have been seduced away from truth, holiness, virtue, and God. Many more, however, have held firm and fast, and resisted steadfastly in the faith,

and have overcome at the last. These Satanic temptations are numerous, varied, determined, persevering, and never cease until the child of God is safely housed within the jasper walls and gates of pearl. One of the greatest mysteries upon which the mind can dwell—one, which in itself is occasion of greater questionings and more unanswerable difficulties than any other, is, why are these things permitted? Why has Satan been permitted so long to exert his power, and to maintain, by the various means referred to, his sway over the world? Why, after six thousand years, is the earth still burdened and bondaged with the effects of his reign? No wonder that the souls under the altar, and saints at the mercy-seat, have cried out so often, and in such agony, "How long, O Lord, how long!" But we believe that the mystery will, one day, be all made plain, and that this long reign of Satan will erelong come to a close.

We cannot think, however, that Satan is *omnipresent*, while we attribute to his agency, without any hesitancy, all the things mentioned, and a thousand more, of which no tongue can speak. He may be swift in his flight

as the lightning's flash, but he cannot be in two places at one and the same time. No doubt he has great skill in the massing and distribution of his forces, which, in countless myriads, are arrayed under him, and which always do his bidding. So that all over the earth, at every moment, this agency is at work, and its fearful operations are being carried on. To doubt or deny this, is either to stultify ourselves, or demonize the race. If men do what they often do, of their own free-will and accord, untempted, and unsolicited, and uninstigated, then, as we have already said, they are more demonized than we are wont to believe. It is somewhat strange, however, that usually the men who deny Satanic agency, deny also the depravity of the human heart. Hence, we see the strange inconsistency in the idea, that while sin and iniquity, in a thousand forms, have prevailed in every age, country, and clime, yet, it is all done without any Satanic agency, and, according to their theory, by men and women who are born pure and holy! It is not worth while to argue with persons so blinded by their dogmas or prejudices, and so incapable of accounting for the actual condition of things

around them. We prefer the clear, plain teachings of the divine word, that men are depraved, and that their depraved natures are acted upon by Satanic agencies, suggesting, inciting, blinding, inflaming, and deceiving them.

Thus it is that Satan and his hosts act upon the human race as enemies, as tempters, as counterfeiters of the religion instituted by Christ, and as the tyrants, deceivers, and destroyers of mankind. The great Robert Hall, speaking of Satan and his work, says: "It must be confessed that the Scriptures teach us to conceive of Satanic agency as occurring in almost every act of deliberate sin. He is said to have filled the heart of Ananias; to have entered into Judas after he had taken the sop. But this does not lead us to ascribe any proper omnipresence to this apostate spirit. . . . In describing the affairs of an empire, it is the uniform custom of the historian to ascribe its achievements to one person, to the ruling mind under whose authority they are effected. Conceiving Satan to be the chief or head of a spiritual dominion, we easily account for the extent of the agency he is affirmed to exert in tempting and seducing the human race; not by sup-

posing him to be personally present whenever such an operation is carried on, but by referring it to his auspices, and considering it as belonging to the history of his empire. On this principle no more ubiquity or omnipresence is attributed to Satan by our system, than to Alexander, Cæsar, or Tamerlane, whose power was felt, and their authority acknowledged, far beyond the limits of their personal presence."

But it is asked, How can Satan and his angels act in this manner upon the minds of men? In reply to this we would say, Men do thus act upon one another, in influencing and controlling them for good or evil. This we cannot deny. If, then, men can thus act upon each other, is it unreasonable to suppose that a superior order of beings may thus act upon, influence, and control them? It is admitted that good angels do mingle among men; that they guide, protect, comfort, direct, and influence them in many ways—that they are, indeed, constantly interested and concerned in this world's affairs. With equal clearness and certainty evil angels are declared to act upon the minds of men, and in the affairs of this

world. And, to our mind, there is no greater difficulty in believing the one than there is in believing the other. So if good angels labor to promote our obedience to God, our safety, and our salvation, may not evil angels be supposed to labor to induce us to disobey God, to injure, and destroy us? But both of these facts are matters of revealed truth, and being revealed in the book of God, and being in harmony with the experience of the race, we fully believe them.

Instead, therefore, of scouting the idea of a personal devil, who is the chief, the prince, the leader of the fallen angels under him, it is all-important that we be made fully aware of his existence and his power, as well as his wicked designs: that we be apprised of our danger, and be led to be on our guard against his assaults, and to be prepared for his temptations and devices. It was in view of this that the Son of God said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke xxii, 31, 32. So Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not

ignorant of his devices." 2 Cor. ii, 11. Also, he says that Satan, in his deceptive and insidious methods, is "transformed into an angel of light." He tells them, in a wonderful chapter of his own history and experience, that "there was given to me . . . the messenger of Satan to buffet me." 2 Cor. xii, 7. He writes to the Thessalonians how Satan had hindered him from coming to them. 1 Thess. ii, 18. Jesus, in his instructive parable of the Sower, tells the multitudes how the devil cometh and taketh away the word which is sown out of their hearts, lest they should believe, and be saved. Luke viii, 12. The evangelist says, that it was the devil which entered into Judas, and led him to act as he did in the betrayal of his Master. John xiii, 2. The apostle Paul writes to the Ephesian Church, that they must put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. He warns Timothy against making a bishop of a novice, "lest . . . he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Also, that he "must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." 1 Tim. iii, 6, 7. He urges him further

to use every means to bring to repentance and acknowledgment of the truth those who oppose themselves, "that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." 2 Tim. ii, 26. St. James urges his brethren to "Resist the devil," assuring them that, if they do, he will flee from them. James iv, 7. And St. Peter exhorts the strangers scattered abroad: "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith." 1 Pet. v, 8, 9. The Revelator tells the Church at Smyrna that "the devil shall cast some of them into prison, that they may be tried." He speaks of this deceiver, as "the great dragon . . . called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:" that he was to be "cast out . . . and his angels . . . cast out with him." Rev. xii, 9.

Here, then, we see that Christ and his apostles warn, exhort, and charge us to be on our guard, to watch, to offer determined resistance to this Satanic agency, and to stand firm and fast in this fight with the powers of darkness: so important is this great truth regarded by

the inspired writers—so essential is it to our best interest that we be made constantly aware of this fact, and on our guard against this foe. Well may every one say:

"My soul, be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down:
The work of faith will not be done,
Till thou obtain the crown."

There is another practical truth to be remembered and regarded in this connection: that all who come under the influence of Satanic agency voluntarily become partakers of the same nature; are his children, his allies, and will suffer the same punishment which he and his angels endure, unless delivered in time by the grace of God. Hence Christ told the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do;" and that as he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, so they, having murderous thoughts in their hearts toward him, and not believing the truth which he told them, were not only the children of the devil, but were also like him. Again, the beloved John

says, "He that committeth sin is *of the devil.*" Judas is called "a devil," because he acted under the influence, and according to the dictation, of Satan. Even Peter was called Satan upon a certain occasion, because, for the moment, he spoke as Satan might be supposed to speak in attempting to thwart the purposes of the divine Son of God. Instances where, in the word of God, men are said to be like Satan, and children of Satan, might be multiplied: but these are sufficient. We call attention only to the fact, that being like him they will, unless saved by grace, share in his punishment. The Lord Jesus Christ —who is to be the judge in that great day— states that he will say to the wicked upon his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels.*" So also in Rev. xxi, 8; xiv, 11. In the one place we read that "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone:" and in the other, "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and

ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The picture which we have here presented is, indeed, dark and terrifying, whether we regard the power and might of Satanic agency in the world, or as affecting individual men and women. It would seem, at first sight, that with such an array of evil powers against us, no one could overcome in the strife; that no one could *be* good or *do* good. It looks as if the current of evil influence was so strong that it would irresistibly bear us away to destruction. But this is only one side of the picture, and that its darker side. There is a bright side toward which we can look with confidence, and which, when by faith we view it, will inspire us with the hope of victory and triumph. "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." True, on the one side are arrayed Satan and all his mighty hosts—an innumerable multitude—possessing great power, subtilty, skill, unity, and determination. But on the other side is the Lord Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, and with him an innumerable company of holy an-

gels. Then, too, we are to remember that the power of the prince of darkness *is limited.* He can go no further than he is permitted to go. It was so in the case of Job. The Lord refused to allow him to proceed in his trial of the afflicted patriarch further than to given points, although far enough to test, to the full, the patience of his servant, his unswerving trust, and his unwavering fidelity. And so the apostle tells us, "There hath no temptation [from Satan] taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. x, 13. Again, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." Furthermore, we have the great fact ever presented before us in the divine word, that *millions have overcome.* They stood firm in their allegiance to God, in the very midst of the fight, and they have gained their eternal reward. They are now crowned conquerors before the throne, no more to be assaulted by the powers of darkness—no more to have their salvation put in peril by their

conflicts with the powers of darkness—*they are forever at rest.* And as they have overcome, so may we.

We know not *all* the reason for the permission of these conflicts and temptations. Some reasons are revealed; some become apparent to us in the lapse of time; but others, and they, perhaps, the most important, we do not know. Generally, we know that they test the fidelity, strengthen the graces, confirm the courage and determination of God's saints, and show to the world what God can do for a poor, weak, trembling child of his in the midst of these conflicts, enabling him to stand fast, and to overcome at the last. It is only victors who are crowned. It is only the overcomers who sit with Christ in his throne. And God has given to his people to become victors, conquerors, and then crowns and enthrones them in his kingdom.

We do not know what the effect may be upon other worlds of this ongoing conflict, with its shouts of victory and triumph ever and anon swelling up to heaven. Doubtless, it fills all hell with rage and agony, while all heaven shouts its acclaim at every victory which is

won. "We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses;" and, if there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents, there is surely great joy over one saint who triumphs over sin and Satan.

Another thing is made very certain: that the feeblest one who trusts in Christ is more than a match for all the powers of darkness. We contend against an already conquered foe:

> "his face
> Deep scars of thunder had intrenched,"

when driven down to hell. He probably knows the limit of his power and reign. He knows that *his time is short*. And even while it lasts, his power is curbed and held in check by One who is mightier than he. He knows full well that Jesus, the mighty Conqueror, is ever counterworking his kingdom and his reign, and that they must and will be overthrown. Perhaps he knows not fully *when* all this will be. The demons in the days of Christ's incarnation besought him not to send them into *the deep*—the abyss of hell. Knowing and fearing his power, perhaps they thought the time of their judgment and confinement in hell's dark prison-house had come. But,

however this may have been, Satan, while his power lasts, will spread all the devastation, ruin, and death in God's physical and moral empire that he can, and in this he finds only too willing allies in the wicked men that are with him; meanwhile, the believer in Christ will overcome, "by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony." He will, he *must*, if faithful, overcome. That triumphant song has been ringing adown the ages: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are *more than conquerors*, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, *shall be able to separate us from the love of God*, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And the victor, Christ Jesus, sends down all along the line of his armies, and all along the centuries, the cheering proclamation, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee *a crown of life*."

"A MIGHTY fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing:
Our Helper he, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

"Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right man on our side,
The man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth is his name,
From age to age the same,
And he must win the battle.

"And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us.
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of darkness grim—
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

"That word above all earthly powers—
No thanks to them—abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also:
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever."—MARTIN LUTHER.

CHAPTER X.

DEMONOLOGY AND DEMONIACAL POSSESSIONS.

FROM the earliest ages there have been persons who have claimed to be, or have been supposed to be, possessed of a superhuman, or supernatural, power to understand, or do, or cause to be done, what ordinary persons could not either know, or do. The names given to these persons have varied according to the age in which they have lived and the languages spoken by the people among whom they have exercised their arts or powers. They are spoken of in the Bible—which is the oldest record of their existence—as "wise men," "sorcerers," "magicians," "necromancers," "charmers," "soothsayers," "astrologers," "witches," "wizards," persons having a "familiar spirit," "diviners," "enchanters," "dreamers." By classical writers they have been denominated "Pythons" or "Pythonesses," "demons," "genii," "dii," "satyrs," "fauns," "nymphs," etc. In more modern times, "in some parts of Great Britain and of Ireland '*fairies*' are be-

lieved in and venerated. In Scotland, besides these, we hear of 'bogies,' 'brownies,' and 'kelpies,' as names of certain superhuman beings dreaded by the superstitious. In Denmark and Iceland we hear of 'trolls;' in Germany of 'nixes,' and many other such beings, who are supposed to have power in human affairs."* In this country they have been called "fortune-tellers," "witches," and "mediums." Then, too, we often read and hear of ghosts, apparitions, spirits, which have appeared to men in various forms, and which have communicated with them upon various subjects.

In ancient times it was the pleasure of kings, governors, and rulers, and they thought it was for their profit also, to have present at their courts, for consultation, a number of such persons. So Pharaoh had them in Egypt in the days of Moses, and they imitated some of his miraculous works, and endeavored to destroy their effect upon the monarch's mind, until they were confounded and overcome. So with Nebuchadnezzar in the days of Daniel, and Sergius Paulus in the time of Paul. And, in-

* Whately, p. 86.

deed, all ancient history has frequent references to them. These persons were thought to have great power in forecasting future events, in communing with the dead, in interpreting dreams, in giving advice in business matters, in the result of wars, and in all things connected with human affairs.

The Scriptures recognize the existence and operations of these persons, but they are always spoken of as "lying spirits," condemned to destruction, and God's people are always warned against them. Dr. A. Clarke, in his comments on Exodus xxii, 18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," says: "From the severity of this law against witches, etc., we may see in what light these were viewed by divine justice. They were seducers of the people from their allegiance to God, on whose judgment alone they should depend; and by impiously prying into futurity, assumed an attribute of God, *the foretelling of future events*, which implied in itself the grossest blasphemy, and tended to corrupt the minds of the people by leading them away from God and the revelation he had made of himself. Many of the Israelites had, no doubt, learned these curious

arts from their long residence with the Egyptians ; and so much were the Israelites attached to them, that we find such arts in repute among them, and various practices of this kind prevailed through the whole of the Jewish history, notwithstanding the offense was capital, and in all cases punished with death."

With almost equal clearness the classical writers allude to them. In Homer the word dæmon is used interchangeably with theos. Hesiod presents these dæmons before us as a class of beings intermediate between the gods and men, who communicate with both. They were, in some instances, thought to be tutelary divinities, watching over the affairs of certain persons. Such was the dæmon of Socrates, so often referred to. " This," he said, " gives me notice every morning of any evil which will befall me that day." And when condemned to death by his judges he replied, " My dæmon did not give me notice this morning of any evil that was to befall me this day. Therefore I cannot regard as an evil my being condemned to die." Plato says, " Every dæmon is a middle being, between god and mortal." Plutarch teaches that dæmons were of two

kinds; the one has the souls of good men, which, upon their departure from the body, were called heroes, were afterward raised to the rank of dæmons, and subsequently to that of gods. These were spoken of in a good and in a bad sense, as good or evil beings. Thus the words angels and dæmons are often used indiscriminately. Plutarch further says: "It is a very ancient opinion that there are certain wicked or malignant dæmons, which envy good men, and endeavor to hinder them in the pursuit of virtue, lest they should be partakers of greater happiness than they enjoy." Bishop Newton tells us that this was the opinion of all the *later* philosophers; and Plutarch affirms it of all the ancient ones. Josephus always uses the words "evil spirits," while Philo regards the word dæmon as referring to both good and evil spirits.*

From all these statements, then, there can be no doubt of the almost universal belief in the existence of these beings. Heathen and Jewish as well as Christian writers bear their testimony to this fact. Nor, further, can there be any doubt that men and women have pro-

* M'Clintock and Strong, "Cyclopædia," *in loco.*

fessed *to be* and *to act* under their influence, as the witch of Endor, Socrates, and, in very modern times, spirit-mediums.

It is readily admitted that certain phenomena connected with these persons and their operations, who are professedly under the influence of demons—whether in a good or bad sense—are beyond our ken, and that we are incapable of always giving a satisfactory explanation of them. At the same time we must believe that, in most instances, they have an *evil origin*.

The great purpose of most of these manifestations is, evidently, to imitate or counterfeit the work and worship of the living and true God in this world. Did God work wonders and miracles before the nations? These demons, under the control of their great leader, endeavored to do the same things by legerdemain, trickery, etc., in order to destroy their effects upon the minds of men. Did God inspire his prophets, and reveal to them the things which were to come? They wrought their votaries into a sort of frenzy, which they called "afflatus," and pretended to foretell future events, and to give forth the will of the gods.

Did God give the "lively oracles?" They, also, had their oracles at Delphi, or Daphne, where the

> "Nightly trance, or breathed spell,
> Inspired the pale-eyed priest in his prophetic cell."

Did God proclaim that he alone was to be worshiped as Jehovah, the only living and true God? They taught and influenced men to worship them, under the names of various heathen divinities.

And so, in these last days, which have been periods of especial spiritual power and influence, these demons have been especially busy in what are called "the phenomena of modern spiritualism," one of their latest and most effective devices for the deception and ruin of immortal souls. Thus in every place, and in every age, they have been employed in opposition to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Perhaps the last manifestation of their presence and power will be in "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," the personification of Satan himself, in some great papal or antichristian power, which shall for awhile deceive, in order to destroy, the nations

before the time of the end shall come. We would not dogmatize upon this point; but it is well known that very many of our most learned expositors have regarded that this is the only proper interpretation of 2 Thess. ii, 3–12. It seems clear to our own mind that the powers of darkness are preparing for the great and final conflict with the Church of God; perhaps the most fearful that the world has ever witnessed. Of its nature and continuance, we have no special information; of the *fact* of its on-coming, there can be no doubt; and of its results, we are assured that they will be triumphant and glorious for the Church of God. The great conflict of the ages is evidently drawing toward a close. In the very nature of the case, it cannot last a great while longer. All events seem to be converging toward this point. All heaven is preparing for it. All the powers of hell are getting ready to engage in it. It is not impossible, but rather probable, that demoniacal possessions and agencies will be more actively and visibly employed in this strife than at any period since the advent of Christ; and their power over the elements of nature, as well as over the souls

and bodies of men and women, will be more directly and manifestly displayed.

We have now to deal more directly with the great question of *demoniacal possessions*, as spoken of in the New Testament.

This subject is one of the deepest interest, affecting, as it does, the truth of the gospel narrative, and illustrating some of its most remarkable phenomena. The credibility of the historic truth of the Gospels is largely at stake in the settlement of this question. They cannot be proven false and yet its other records remain true. If the record concerning these possessions is false, all is false. Christ and his evangelists, in the most positive words and in various places, assert directly and indirectly this fact; and if they taught what was false in this instance, their statements are unworthy of credence in all others. The original words employed by the sacred writers and by Christ in speaking of them are: "Daimones;" "Daimonia;" "Pneumata Ponera;" "Pneumata Akatharta;" and the prime leader, or prince of them all, as we have seen, is "Diabolos," or "Satanas."

It has been supposed by some that the

Saviour and his apostles merely conformed to the popular representations of the times in speaking of the existence and possessions of demons, and in their efforts to cast them out. The reply to this is simply that they always speak of demons *as a reality*, and of demoniacal possessions as a fact; not merely casually or incidentally, but formally and directly. Is it at all probable that our Lord, who on all occasions endeavored to overthrow the popular superstitions of the Jews, would, in this instance, do what would encourage a lying superstition? On this point Trench, in his valuable work on the miracles of our Lord, says, "Had not the moral interests at stake been so transcendent, our idea of Christ's absolute veracity, apart from the value of the truth which he communicated, forbids us to suppose that he could have spoken as he did, being perfectly aware all the while that there was no corresponding reality to justify the language which he used. . . . It would have been quite a different thing for the Lord to have fallen in with the popular language, and to have spoken of persons under various natural afflictions as 'possessed,' supposing he had found such a language current,

but now no longer, however it might once have been, vividly linked to the idea of possession by spirits of evil. In this there had been nothing more than in our speaking of certain forms of madness as *lunacy*. . . . But suppose, with this same disbelief in lunar influences, we were to begin to speak not merely of *lunatics*, but of persons on whom the moon was working, to describe the cure of such as the ceasing of the moon to afflict them — the physician to promise his patient that the moon should not harm him any more—would not this be quite another matter, a direct countenancing of error and delusion? Would there not here be that absence of agreement between thoughts and words, in which the essence of a lie consists? Now Christ does every-where speak in such a language as this. Take, for instance, his words in Luke xi, 17-26, and assume him to have known, all the while he was thus speaking, that the whole Jewish belief of demoniac possessions was utterly baseless, that Satan exercised no such power over the bodies or spirits of men, and what should we have here for a King of truth?" *

* Trench, p. 119.

In like manner, Whately, in his work on "Good and Evil Angels," (pages 107, 108,) says: "And if such a connivance at religious error can be in any case justifiable, in *this*, at least, it would have been most completely inexcusable. It would not have even the 'tyrant's plea—necessity,' in its favor. For, supposing the Jews ever so much wedded to their belief in demoniacal possessions, and to have been disposed to reject with scorn any one who should have *merely told* them that those patients whom they supposed to be possessed were not so, and that the popular position was all a delusion—supposing this—still, if any one who gave them such an assurance did, at the same time, cure those very patients, every one would have readily believed him. The connivance, therefore, at superstitious error, the confirmation and propagation of religious delusion, which these interpreters impute to Jesus and his followers, would have been one of the most *gratuitous* and most inexcusable of all the 'pious frauds' that ever were committed. And if there are any persons who, on careful examination and deliberate reflection, feel convinced that Jesus did thus lend himself to pop-

ular superstition, without even any apparent necessity, and who yet regard his conduct as justifiable, and profess to venerate him as 'a Teacher sent from God,' what can we think of their moral principles? And what assurance can we have of the sincerity of their own belief on any point? The instance of the demoniac at Gadara may be regarded as a test case. Three of the evangelists distinctly record it, and all declare that the man was possessed with demons. True, St. Matthew speaks of *two* demoniacs, while St. Mark and St. Luke only speak of *one*. Various reasons have been given for this. It may be, as in the case of the healing of the blind men, one evangelist speaks of *two*, and another of *one*, probably because one was the principal spokesman. Or, one may have been more notable than the other, as St. Augustine supposes. Or, one may have been *fiercer* than the other, as others have thought. For one cause or another one only looms up before us with fearful and frightful distinctness, as we read of the effects produced by his being possessed with a demon or a legion of them. And to show that it was a real case of demoniacal possession, *and noth-*

ing else, the demons, when they were cast out, were permitted to go into the herd of swine, which, under their influence, 'ran violently down a steep place into the lake,' and were drowned. And not only so. Jesus commanded the dispossessed man to go and declare throughout his country 'how great things God had done for him.'" Again he says, (Whately, page 112,) "So, this man was *expressly charged* by Jesus to go about reporting what would have been, supposing there was no such thing as demoniacal possession, a *falsehood*, known to be such by the Person who commissioned him."

2. The opinion that what are called demoniacal possessions were only *certain forms of diseases*, has no better foundation. How, indeed, such an opinion could be entertained, in the face of the abundant testimony to the contrary, is one of the mysteries of the power of unbelief which remains as yet unsolved. As if for the very purpose of disposing of this objection, a clear distinction is made in the Gospels between the two conditions. In Mark i, 32, it is said, "They brought unto him all that were *diseased*, and *them that were*

possessed with devils." Again, in his great commission to his apostles, the Saviour says to them, "These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall *they cast out devils* —they shall *lay hands on the sick*, and they shall recover." Mark xvi, 17, 18. Again, we read in Luke vi, 17, 18, "A great multitude of people, out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be *healed of their diseases;* and they that were *vexed with unclean spirits:* and they were healed." Still more decisive is the passage in Matthew iv, 24: "And they brought unto him all *sick people* that were taken with *divers diseases* and torments, and those which *were possessed with devils*, and those which *were lunatic*, and those that had the *palsy*, and he healed them." Here are sick, diseased, palsied, and possessed persons; but each class distinctly separated from the other.

It is, of course, readily admitted that there was, ordinarily, bodily disease or infirmity associated with the demoniacal possession, such as blindness, dumbness, epilepsy, symptoms of insanity. But back of all these, and in some instances directly occasioning these conditions,

and intensifying them when they were in actual existence, was the fact of this possession.

3. Another class of interpreters tell us that the persons referred to merely *imagined that they were possessed*, and that when they acted or spoke they were anxious to make the impression that they were under the power of some evil spirit. Hence the heathen Lucian says, "The patient is silent; the demon returns the answers to the questions that are asked." All this might well harmonize with the teachings of heathenism, but fails to meet the case of the New Testament accounts. There demons do speak through those whom they possess, it is true; but mark what they say in several instances. They say that they know Christ. And they do not speak of him, as the enlightened Jews would do, as "the Son of David," but they call him "the Son of God," "the Holy One of God." Now, according to the theory we are combating, these imaginary, insane, diseased persons, knew more about Christ than the greater, and even better, part of their countrymen, or else it charges that the evangelists are guilty of the most deliberate and audacious falsehood.

"Furthermore, our Lord every-where speaks of demoniacs, not as persons merely of disordered intellects, [or imaginary beings,] but as subjects and thralls of an alien spiritual might. He addresses the evil spirits as distinct from the man: 'Hold thy peace, and come out of him.' Mark i, 25. And the unworthy reply that he fell in with the notions of the afflicted, and humored them in order to facilitate their cure, is anticipated by the fact that in his most confidential discourses with his disciples he uses exactly the same language. Matt. x, 8, and especially Matt. xvii, 21, 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'" *

4. But it is not at all improbable that many of these cases had been brought under the power of the diseases or the lunacy which they suffered, and to the demoniacal possession which they consciously endured, by the indulgence in evil principles, passions, or pursuits. "Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial bond between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fear-

* Trench, p. 118.

ful incursions of the powers of darkness."* Judas by his covetousness had prepared his soul for the entrance of the demon who took possession of him, soul and body, so that he committed the greatest crime, under this influence, which man has ever been guilty of. So with Ananias and Sapphira. Their covetousness had so blinded them that they were readily taken possession of by the demon, and driven headlong to destruction.

5. *What, then, does this demoniacal possession mean?* It is evident, from what we have already considered, that if we would believe the Gospel we must unhesitatingly accept *the fact* of these possessions. And as to *the character* of these possessions we are not left in doubt. It was the entrance into, and control of, men and women by evil spirits, evil in their character, superior in their intelligence and power to men, and which, having entered into men, employed all their power to effect their destruction, both body and soul. Physical disorders, mental derangements, and lunacy were not only the results of such possessions, but these effects were distinctly traceable to their agency. Having,

* Trench, p. 160.

one or more of them, entered into a man, they assumed absolute control of him. They gave him, at times, superhuman strength; they tore him, vexed and tormented him, spoke through him words, and even truths, which he would not and could not have uttered of himself. In some instances the poor victims were conscious of this possession, and at times would sigh and groan for deliverance. In other instances they have voluntarily admitted them, and voluntarily retained them. In one instance, that of Mary Magdalene, we read of seven devils which had been cast out of her; and in another a whole legion of devils was cast out. Of *the possibility* of such possession there can be no doubt. There is no greater difficulty in believing in evil spirits than there is in believing in evil men. We know that evil men do influence and control others, as we have already seen in these pages; and there is no greater difficulty in believing that evil spirits actuate and influence wicked men to do evil and wrong.

There can be little doubt that such possessions were more frequently manifested during our Saviour's incarnation and public life than at any former or subsequent period. "The

period of our Lord's being on earth was certainly, more than any other in the history of the world, under the dominion of evil. The foundations of man's moral being were broken up, and the hour and power of darkness 'prevailing.' It was exactly the crisis for such soul-maladies as these, in which the spiritual and bodily should be thus strangely interlinked; and it is nothing wonderful that they should have abounded at that time; for the predominance of certain spiritual maladies, at certain epochs of the world's history, which were specially fitted for their generation, with their gradual decline and disappearance in others less congenial to them, is a fact itself admitting no manner of question." *

Again: "It was but natural that the power of evil should show itself in more open and direct hostility than ever in the age of our Lord and his apostles, when its time was short. It was natural, also, that it should take the special form of possession in an age of such unprecedented and brutal sensuality as that which preceded his coming, and continued till the leaven of Christianity was

* Alford, pp. 86, 87.

felt. Nor was it less natural that it should have died away gradually before the great direct, and still greater indirect, influence of Christ's kingdom. The early fathers allude to its existence, and dwell on the power of Christian exorcism to cast it out from the country as a test of the truth of the Gospel, and as one well-known benefit which it conferred on the empire." *

Let it not be forgotten that these poor demonized creatures were not *always the worst of men.* Sometimes, as we read, even children were thus possessed. And then, in the case of adults, there were many who had involuntarily become thus possessed. "We all feel that Judas's possession, when Satan entered into him, (John xiii, 27,) was specifically different from that of one of the unhappy persons who were the subjects of Christ's healing power. Or, to borrow an illustration from the world of fiction, none would speak of Iago as δαιμονιζόμενος, however all the deadly malignity of hell was concentrated in him; we should trace much closer analogies to this state in some aspects of Hamlet's life. Thus, too, in

* M'Clintock and Strong, *in loco.*

actual life, the horror and deep anguish of a sinner at the contemplation of his sin, may have helped on this overthrow of his spiritual life; anguish which a more hardened sinner would have escaped, but escaped it only by being a worse and more truly devilish man. We are not, then, to see in these cases of possession the deliberate giving in to the Satanic will of an utterly lost soul, but the still recoverable wreck of what might once have been a noble spirit." *

The question often arises, Why are not these demoniacal possessions witnessed at the present day? But in the very way in which the question is asked, it is assumed that they are *not* seen in these days; an admission which we are very far from making. In the very common language of the day, how often do we hear men speak of the demon of lust, of jealousy, revenge, hate, malice, covetousness, murder, and rage, which actuates men to certain wicked or unholy deeds? The common consciousness of mankind regards this as essentially true, and so men speak of it in all languages. True, they often do it in the way of personification;

* Trench on "Miracles," p. 123.

but this is done in such a manner as to show that the evil principle personified has an evil spirit for its cause. And do not men now exhibit in their minds, their bodies, and their actions the results of such possession? Do not many bear on their brow, in their eyes, and in their countenance, the evidence of the demon, or demons, which dwell within them and control them? And would men act as they often do, were it not for such possession? We must believe that men are now, in many instances, just as actually, and just as fearfully, under the power of demoniacal possession as at any former period of the world's history. Do we not see this in the fearful cases of delirium tremens which, alas! occur so frequently in this age of inebriety? Is not the poor victim as much under the possession of the demon as any whom Christ healed? And just as there was in the possessed in the time of Christ a "double consciousness," so there is in these cases. Trench quotes Bright and Addison, two eminent authorities on the practice of medicine, to confirm this. "In accesses of delirium tremens, the penalty of excessive indulgence in intoxicating drinks, we find some-

thing analogous to this double consciousness. The victim of this, in his most tranquil and collected moments, is not to be trusted, for the transition from this state to the greatest violence is instantaneous; he is often recalled by a word to an apparent state of reason, but as quickly his false impressions return; *there is sometimes evidence at the time of a state of double consciousness*, a condition of mind which is sometimes remembered by the patient when the paroxysm is over."*

And does not "the god of this world now blind the minds of them which believe not?" Are not Satan and his angels now "transformed into angels of light" in order to deceive and destroy? Are not demons inciting now to murder, suicide, lust, and lies, as well as at former periods? Most assuredly they are.

One of the great methods of Satan's operations in this world has been to conceal himself and the demons acting under his control, and to make men doubt, and even deny, his existence, and to attribute all the effects of his operations to purely natural causes, or to make the impression that they are the work of God.

* Trench, p. 125.

Hence, in many instances, while men have been acting under his power, and have been led captive by him at his will, they have stoutly denied his very existence. So carefully has he concealed his presence, and the chains by which his captives are bound. So Whately says, "This is just what one would naturally expect, that an insidious and crafty adversary, such as Satan is represented in Scripture, should endeavor to throw men off their guard; first, by inducing them, if possible, to disbelieve his existence altogether—to explain away, as mere figures of speech, all the declarations of Scripture on the subject, and to flatter themselves that they *have* no such enemy to contend against; and, in the next place, by leading those who do believe in his existence, to mistake the character of their danger—to be alarmed in the wrong place, and to be least apprehensive precisely where there is the most occasion for it; when he 'transforms himself into an angel of light,' that is when he conceals his real approaches, and disguises the character of the temptation offered." *

When *men* wish to deceive, to rob, to de-

* Whately, p. 150, *et seq.*

fraud, to lie, they do not assume their true, their real character. They always strive to appear to be what they are not; to conceal their deep and dark designs. If they showed themselves in their true light we should be on our guard—we should defend ourselves; but in their false or hypocritical garb we are often deceived and injured; and many are worried and destroyed. So Satan and his angels operate upon human minds and hearts; concealing their real persons and purposes, and gilding their bait, making men even to believe ofttimes that they are their best friends, while, in reality, they are their most deadly enemies. Both Martin Luther and John Wesley regard the presence and power of these demons, in the various sicknesses, accidents, elements of nature, in lunacy, and, indeed, in all the ills to which "flesh is heir." Perhaps this may be going to the opposite extreme. But we cannot be too deeply impressed with the fact of their presence, and of the constant exercise of their baneful influence. At the same time, we should "refer nothing to their agency that could not be proved to be actually their work." If we attempt to prove too much the argument

is weakened. This was Calvin's view, and with this we heartily agree.

Let us urge, as we close this chapter, that with such an array of demoniacal agencies around us, we have need for constant watchfulness and prayer. No one but God can enable us to overcome; but we may be, if faithful to him, "more than conquerors, through Him who hath loved us."

CHAPTER XI.

THE WORSHIP OF ANGELS.

AMONG the many things against which St. Paul cautioned the Colossians was, "the worshiping of angels." It has been supposed that "some Alexandrian Jew had appeared at Colossæ, professing a belief in Christianity, and imbued with the Greek philosophy of the school of Philo, but combining with it the rabbinical theosophy and angelology which afterward was embodied in the Kabala, and an extravagant asceticism, which also, afterward, distinguished several sects of the Gnostics. In short, one of the first heresiarchs of the incipient Gnosticism had begun to pervert the Colossians from the simplicity of their faith. There was great danger to be apprehended from this source, at the stage which the Church had now reached; especially in a Church which consisted, as that of Colossæ did, principally of Gentiles; and that, too, in Phrygia, where the national character was so prone to a mystic fanaticism. We need not wonder, therefore,

that St. Paul, acting under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, should have thought it needful to use every effort to counteract the growing evil." *

This custom was prevalent before the introduction of Christianity, not only among the Jewish people, but also among the heathen. Among the Jewish people, especially, it prevailed extensively, and tended greatly to that corruption of religion which was manifest at the coming of Christ. It was an outgrowth of idolatrous worship, and, indeed, was a part of that system of evil designed to draw men away from the worship of the true God. Hesiod, in his account of the "Five Ages"—the "golden, silver, brazen, heroic, and iron ages"—refers to the various forms in which this worship was regarded and performed. Herodotus, the most ancient Grecian historian, also speaks of this corruption of doctrine in giving an account of the Egyptian priesthood and religion. "The Jewish perversions of this doctrine of angels were very deplorable, incorporating many of the heathen corruptions with the facts contained in the oracles of God.

* Conybeare and Howson, vol. ii, p. 383.

They supposed the whole angelical creation to be organized under ten denominations, which they give as Chaioth-Hakkodesh, Ophanim, Esellim, Chasmalim, Seraphim, Melachim, Elohim, Beni-Elohim, Cherubim, Ishim." Here we give a few specimens of the "old wives' fables" held by that people. The first is an account given by Mr. Allen, in his book on "Cherished Traditions." "As a specimen of rabbinical angelology, I shall transcribe part of the account given of the first, or lowest, of the seven firmaments contained in the celestial regions, that region being represented as the least populous. It is denominated 'The Heavens,' and is affirmed to be the residence of seven archangels: Ophaniel, having under him seventy-one angels; Thagra, seventy-four; Daudæel, thirty-six; Gadalmijah, forty-six; Assimur, fifty-eight; Pascar, thirty-five; Boel, forty. And so on they proceed through all the firmaments."

That the Jews actually worshiped angels "is evident," Dr. Gill says, "from their liturgies, or prayer-books, where they say, 'O ye angels of mercies;' or, 'Ye holy angels, ministers of the Most High, entreat now the face of God

for good.' Elsewhere, they say, 'Let Juhach keep us, let Juhach deliver us, and Juhach help us.' This was the name of the angel who, they supposed, had the care of men. They also speak of Sandalphos, who, they say, is appointed over the prayers of the righteous."

To these Jewish superstitions, referred to by the apostle, and also by Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Epiphanius, and others of the early fathers, succeeded the errors of the Gnostics. And in the fourth century there were "those who directly worshiped angels, and had private meetings for that purpose. They were expressly condemned by the thirty-fifth canon of the Council of Laodicea; wherein that council adjudged this practice to be *idolatry*, and *apostasy from Jesus Christ*."

From this source the Roman Catholic Church has derived its speculations—adoration, worship, and invocation of angels. They regard them, as did the ancient Jews, as mediators between God and men, and worship them as they do the saints and the Virgin Mary, thus justly deserving the name of an idolatrous hierarchy. Many of them, however, endeavor to escape from the force of this charge by mak-

ing a difference between *dulia*, or worship inferior to that which is divine, and *latria*, which was used by Magus and his followers. Cardinal Bellarmine, that astute Romanist, labors to make this distinction. But when the apostle forbade the worshiping of angels, we believe that he included *all worshiping* of them, whether *latria* or *dulia.**

When Saint John saw and heard "the things" which he records in Rev. xxii, overwhelmed with wonder and surprise, he "fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed them to him." At once he met with the stern rebuke: "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; worship God." This is the great law of the Church for all the ages. God will not permit any creature to be worshiped in any form. From the earliest ages, by the plainest enactments, enforced by the most momentous sanctions and guarded by all the power of his throne, he has proclaimed that *He alone* is to be worshiped and adored. And woe to any one or any hierarchy that would

* *Vide* Timpson, pp. 29–39.

attempt, in any form, to rob him of the glory due to his name! All the heavenly host worship him; angel and archangel, seraphim and cherubim, patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs. The saints of all the ages adore him. Nor is there any rank in all the heavenly throng that would allow themselves to be worshiped. It has remained for the corrupt, apostate Roman Church, "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," to practice this idolatrous worship, which is offensive to Heaven, and which, with her other abominations, sooner or later will bring down upon her the consuming fire of God's righteous vengeance.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EXISTENCE OF ANGELS EVIDENCE OF A FUTURE STATE.

WHATEVER doubts may be entertained by us as to the habitation of other worlds by races of beings, intelligent and immortal, adapted to live under the peculiar conditions of temperature, climate, and atmosphere which astronomers tell us prevail in those worlds, there can be no doubt in the mind of any believer in the existence of angels, that there is another world, another clime, where the angels dwell. And that world must be one of purity, blessedness, glory, and joy, where old age, sickness, sorrow, and death never enter, and tears are all wiped away. Under the Old Testament dispensation, when the knowledge of a future state was comparatively dim and shadowy, how vivid and how strong must have been the impression made upon the minds of the Jewish people, and, through them, upon their descendants, and upon the surrounding nations which would hear of these things, by

the appearances of these messengers of light and glory from time to time among them!

The great fact was not only thus revealed to them of the *existence* of another world, but other facts, cognate to this, that that world is in some way linked to this; that its inhabitants have great interest in this world; that they are employed to bring messages from that world to this; and that when they had thus done, they ascended up again to the place whence they came. Perhaps the clearest, if not the earliest, revelation of this was made known to Jacob as he lay sleeping upon his stony pillow, while he saw, in his vision, that wonderful ladder, "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it." Here the connection between heaven and earth was made manifest, and the ministrations and visitations of angels distinctly revealed.

This vision, occurring as it did, so early in the history of the race, must not only have profoundly impressed the patriarch and his immediate descendants, but, also, every successive generation of the Jewish people. Nor did this instance stand alone. It was confirmed

by all those appearances to which reference has been made in the previous chapters of this book.

There was no angel, seen by patriarch or prophet, in vision or in human form, actually conversing with men or women, or flying with lightning swiftness from heaven to earth, but who declared by his presence here among men, "there is another world, there is another state of being, above this, beyond this, and essentially differing from this." We have no means of knowing precisely how far these angelic visitations influenced the minds of the Jewish people upon the great questions of a future life. Nor would we intimate, by any means, that this was the only, or even the principal, evidence which they had of the future life. For, next to the grand idea of the existence of a personal God, their religion was founded upon the idea of the personal existence of man, and the immortal future of that existence. It was, indeed, a meaningless system without these two great factors. We have no sympathy with that class of thinkers and writers, who affirm that the Old Testament saints, and the Jewish people at large, had but little, if any,

idea of a future state. This is argued by some persons because the Scriptures of the Old Testament say so little directly about that future life. To this it is sufficient to reply, that they no more attempted to *prove* this fact than they did that of the existence of God. These two great postulates were axiomatic with them ; as such they accepted them, believed them, rejoiced on account of them, and died in full confidence of a future state. It does not fall within the range of this volume to present, formally, the arguments for this position. These are ample, and, we think, perfectly conclusive.

But, believing, as they evidently did, in that future world and life, how strongly was their faith confirmed when they saw those heavenly messengers appearing for their instruction, for their guidance, for their defense, for their comfort, and in all these things acting under the divine command and with divine power and authority. Here were visible and tangible evidences of the existence of that world for which they hoped, and in anticipation of which, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they "endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

Not only so: it was this hope which made

Moses "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God; . . . for he had respect to the recompense of the reward." All those ancient worthies died in, or according to, this faith. And not only by their life, but also by their death, they declared that they sought and expected a country—that is, a heavenly. Their expectation was not, certainly, for the country from which they had come. If they had been mindful of that, they might have had frequent opportunity to return; but now, in life and in death, they declared that they desired a better country, where the angels dwelt. They would never have wrought the wonders they did—wonders of faith—if it had not been for these divine inspirations coming from the life beyond the grave. They would never have endured such trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; to be stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; to wander in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being afflicted, destitute, tormented. Paradise appeared to the vision of their faith as "Abraham's bosom," where the angels bore the sainted of the earth, to suffer and to die no more. We are aware that it may be argued that the fact of angel-

ical existence, and of the existence of another world where they dwell, may all be believed and known, and yet that it would by no means legitimately follow that men and women from *this world*, evidently of another race, and existing under vastly different conditions, would ever be dwellers in *that world*, or partakers of its immortality of existence and blessedness. All this would, perhaps, be true if this were an isolated fact, disconnected from other cognate facts which declare the truth of man's immortality, while angelical existences in another state of being from this only confirm them. True, it is no evidence that *we* shall exist in the heavenly world forever because the angels dwell there forever. But when God reveals in his word that their dwelling-place may be ours, and that their companionship may be enjoyed by us forever, then all becomes clear to us, and the undoubted fact of their existence, and of their manifestation in visible forms, confirms our hopes and heightens our joys.

It may not be foreign, but even germane, to this line of thought, to say that the Old Testament saints, in addition to the evidence already referred to, had two visible demonstrations that

men, human beings, might ascend to that world where the angels dwell. The one was in the very dim twilight of the patriarchal dispensation, the other amid the full blaze of the glory of the prophetical. We refer to the translations of Enoch and Elijah. Very true, we do not know the particulars of the translation of Enoch. No word has come down to us of the manner in which God took him. We do know something of the life which he lived; how he walked with God; how he had the testimony that he pleased God; how he maintained that walk for three hundred years; how that all this was done amid the cares and trials of rearing and supporting his family; and how that, after having lived thus, when he was three hundred and sixty-five years old, he "was translated that he should not see death." A brief obituary notice this; but it contains a world of interest and import. We might gather, however, from the thought, that while there is an infinite diversity in God's plans and operations, there is also an essential unity in all; and as the chariots and horses of fire came subsequently for Elijah, it is probable that they came first for Enoch. The design

of God was, doubtless, to impress upon a rude and godless age the great truth that the man who walks with God is cared for and loved by him; and also to show to men, in a visible form, the fact of the actual existence of another world to which God's faithful servant had been translated, and where others, who lived like him, might go. They could no longer, indeed, doubt the existence of that world, after they had seen the chariots and horses of fire bearing the deathless prophet to that eternal home.

Then, again, amid the glories of the prophetical period, God deigns to give to idolatrous Israel, in the midst of its degeneracy and backslidings, when nearly the whole nation was wandering after Baal, another demonstration of the existence of a future world. The circumstances connected with the translation of Elijah are related much more in detail than those connected with the translation of Enoch. For many a weary mile Elijah and Elisha had traveled on together. From Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, from Jericho to the Jordan, and then across the mantle-smitten river. Standing together for a few moments, not far from its banks, Elijah paused

to ask, "What shall I do for thee before I be taken away from thee?" Elisha made a request which it was difficult to gratify: "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." The narrative then states, "And it came to pass as they still went on, and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more." For three days some of the doubting ones scoured the mountains and plains near the Jordan, "but found him not." God had taken him, soul and body, to heaven, from whence he afterward came *as a representative of the prophetical dispensation*, to converse with Moses and with Christ concerning the decease which the latter was to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Thus, by angelical appearances, and by the translation of the patriarch and the prophet, was the great truth of a future life kept before the minds of God's ancient people. And so correlated was the fact of the existence of angels with that of the immortality of the soul,

that the Sadducees were only logical when, denying the resurrection, they denied also the existence of angel and spirit; and the Pharisees were equally logical when they confessed both. Acts xxiii, 8. The logical corollary would run, in the one instance, No angel—then there is no spirit, and no future state, and therefore no resurrection of the dead: and in the other, There are angels, there are spirits, therefore there will be a resurrection of the dead. It was against these Sadducees and skeptics that the Son of God employed the keenest blade of divine truth, showing them, where they least expected he could find it, the proof of the resurrection of the dead and of a conscious existence in another world, or state. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob? God is not the God *of the dead, but of the living.*" And then with one stroke of that blade he penetrated the whole crust of their unbelief, laying open and bare to the sight of men the wondrous fact which he would proclaim: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; *but are as the angels of God in heaven.*"

Archbishop Whately has well said, "There were exhibited to the senses of men, (in a few instances,) created beings in many respects like men, in others more refined and elevated; having a human form and speech, and something of human affections, but without the grosser attributes of mortals. This served to form and keep up the idea, not only that *man* is not the highest of God's creatures, but, moreover, that there is a state of existence, exalted indeed and glorified beyond that in which we now are, yet not so utterly remote from our present condition but that we may conceive something resembling it to be reserved for us hereafter, and may be led to aspirations for something higher and better than man's life on earth, and which yet shall not be inconsistent with our consciousness of personal identity—with our being—and feeling ourselves to be—the *same* individuals.

"The angels, in short, in their visits to this world of ours, gave man a glimpse of a higher and better world. They were *specimens*, so to

speak, of what is to be found in the heavenly Canaan, our land of promise, answering to those fruits which the spies, sent by Moses into Canaan, brought to the Israelites in the dreary and barren wilderness, in order to convince them of the goodness of that pleasant land, and to encourage them to enter it." *

Here, then, we see that the resurrection, the angels, and the future life in heaven, are all so related that the one fact involves and implies the other. These great truths, dimly outlined, yet firmly believed by Old Testament saints, are here authoritatively announced by Him who is himself the Resurrection and the Life: "Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the Gospel."

* "Good and Evil Angels," pp. 29, 30.

"Man's highest triumph! man's profoundest fall!
The death-bed of the just! is yet undrawn
By mortal hand: it merits a divine:
Angels should paint it, angels ever there;
There on a post of honor and of joy."—YOUNG.

"Angels, where'er we go, attend
Our steps, whate'er betide;
With watchful care their charge defend,
And evil turn aside.

"Our lives those holy angels keep
From every hostile power;
And, unconcerned, we sweetly sleep,
As Adam in his bower.

"And when our spirits we resign,
On outstretched wings they bear,
And lodge us in the arms divine,
And leave us ever there."—CHARLES WESLEY.

"Hark! they whisper: angels say,
'Sister spirit, come away!'
What is this absorbs me quite—
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath?—
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

"The world recedes—it disappears;
Heaven opens on my eyes; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
'O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?'"
—ALEXANDER POPE.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANGELS AND DYING SAINTS.

"AND it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Such was the closing scene of a life of beggary, disease, and sorrow —of the life of one, whose latest physicians were "the dogs, which came and licked his sores." But the gospel narrative does not close with the termination of his earthly career; it partly draws aside the veil, and reveals to us angelic spirits bearing him away, and placing him in Abraham's bosom—the Jewish phrase for the paradise of the blessed. There is no mention made of his burial. No one knows where his body rests. The rich man was probably buried with all pomp and display—with costly show, retinues of mourners, loud lamentations. But, probably, in some corner of the potter's field the body of this poor man, unattended and unwept by any number of earthly friends, was laid away to rest. And yet, poor as he had been, afflicted and unbefriended, he

had, doubtless, been a servant of God. He did not have these angelic honors simply because he had been poor, or afflicted. Many think that if they are poor in this world, and suffer many afflictions and trials here, *therefore* it will be well with them in the world to come. There is, however, no intimation of this in the word of God. The poverty of multitudes is often self-caused—the result of thriftlessness, sensuality, and sin; and they will not only be poor in this world, but poverty-stricken in their souls through the ages of eternity. The vast multitude before the eternal throne went up to that glorious world through great tribulation; but the tribulation did not save them; they had "*washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*" So, if God's people are poor, as he ofttimes permits them to be, they do not rely upon this as a passport to heaven; they rely only on the merits and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through these alone they are saved. As Lazarus was a servant of God, the Lord had given "his angels charge over him" while he lived; and then they bore him to heaven when he died.

One of the Jewish paraphrasts has said:

"With the Shekinah come the ministering angels to receive the soul of a righteous man. Particularly it is said of Moses, at the time of his death, that the holy, blessed God descended from the highest heaven, and the ministering angels with him, to take the soul of his servant." Sometimes they say, that "not only their angels, but the companions of angels, attend at such a time." For instance, they say, "When a righteous man departs out of this world three companies of ministering angels meet him: One says, 'Come in peace;' and another says, 'Walking in his uprightness;' and the other says, 'He shall enter into peace.'" And yet again, "If a soul is worthy, how many holy troops, or companies, are ready to join it, and bring it into paradise! but if it is not worthy, how many strange troops are ready to bring it into the way of hell! These are the troops of the destroying angels."

These beliefs of the Jewish people were substantially confirmed by the words of our Saviour in what is known as "the parable of the rich man and Lazarus;" and, also, by the general teachings of the New Testament Scriptures. These leave no doubt whatever upon

our minds of the attendance of angelic ministrants at the death-bed of every saint of God. There is, indeed, very strong presumptive evidence of this fact. Surely, if the angels are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," they would not, after ministering to them all the days of their life, and through all its varying scenes, leave them in this extremity of their nature, when heart and flesh are failing them. These angelic ministrants are not often visible to mortal eyes; but they are none the less really present in that hour. The blessed Christ, who is with them in that hour, and the blessed Comforter, who supports and comforts them, are invisible; but still their presence is consciously experienced and enjoyed. So the children of God in all the ages have not only been conscious of the presence of Jesus, but, also, of the presence of his holy angels. And not only so, in instances not a few, dying saints have, when evidently in the full possession of their powers, seen the bright forms of angels hovering near them, around their bed, in their room, and ready to escort them to the realms of the blessed. "Spiritual, therefore, as are the souls of those

who are freed from the body, or clothed in a medium which cannot be traced by mortal sense, the holy angels attend the last moments of the servants of God, and when the brief struggle is over, bear them triumphantly to their rest above. Not that the spirit would not find its way home without this agency, for under any circumstance the sanctified spirit would instinctively ascend to God; but by this arrangement the angels themselves are blessed. They rejoiced at the sinner's repentance; they hailed with holy triumph his conversion; they have waited upon and ministered to him through all his pilgrimage; and it is with rapture and with shouts of triumph that they bear his glorified spirit to the paradise of God. It is a well-known psychological fact, that in many instances as the power of physical perception becomes obtuse, intellectual and spiritual perceptions become exceedingly acute. As the bodily eye grows dim, the spiritual eye grows clearer; as the bodily ear becomes insensible to sound, the spiritual ear develops its power. With this fact before us, we may be permited to suggest, whether there be not more than imagination in the circum-

stances connected with the departure of many of the people of God. How many of the dying saints, as they entered the waters of Jordan, have expressed their confident assurance that angelic spirits were present, and have called the attention of weeping friends to strains of melody audible only to the dying ear." *

In how many ways they minister by the couch of the dying saint we know not: nor shall we ever know, until, mayhap, to some extent when we are dying, and more fully still when we listen to their recital of their ministrations to us in the heavenly world. So true is this, that no Christian doubts that he will enjoy such ministries when he comes to the time of his departure from this world. The hymnology of all Churches, and of all creeds, is fragrant with this thought; and especially, all the evangelical theology of Christendom dwells upon it with holy fervor, not only as a revealed fact, but as abundantly confirmed by the testimonies of multitudes of dying saints.

This hope is a most inspiring one to the Christian. We shall not be *alone* when we

* Rawson, "Holy Angels," pp. 103, 104.

die. We shall not pass through the valley of the shadow of death *alone*. No matter where, or when, or how we die, if we fall asleep in Jesus, these heavenly messengers will be near to convey us to the realms of light. Not only so; it gives us unspeakable comfort when our loved ones depart from us. We are with them up to the last moment. We follow them not only to the brink of the river, but we still hold their hands in ours when the spray of the cold waters chills their frame. We behold the last gasp, we listen to the last faint breath; and then—they are gone! Amid blinding tears we look, or strive to look, through the darkness which now envelops us. We try to follow them. But, alas! our vision is too dim and dull to penetrate the veil which now separates us from them. All that we see are the lifeless forms, the marble-cold remains; and these we must soon arrange to bury out of our sight. But right here comes in the comforting assurance, that while we could not accompany them—while we cannot see the bright world to which they have gone—the angels have *carried* them safely to its bright and everlasting abodes.

It is related of the late Dr. Durbin, that, in one of his most eloquent sermons, he referred to the death of his son, "Willie," who departed this life when only twenty-one years of age. He said: "Just before he died, we were conversing together quietly, until something called me away for a moment from his bedside. When I returned, and looked upon him, *he was gone*. A great sense of loneliness and desolation crept over me, as I mused and wondered, How could he find his way home? How could he pick out his path homeward among the worlds? This querying perplexed me for awhile, until, eventually, a verse of Scripture came to my relief, and threw light upon this question." By this time the interest in the audience was wrought up to the highest pitch. Every one was anxious to know what was the verse of Scripture referred to. Then he quoted, in his own inimitable way, "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." "Then," said he, with an emphasis which thrilled all hearts, "*then I knew how Willie found his way home.*"

This vision of angels around the dying bed

is often enjoyed by the dear children of our hearts and homes, who are early called from us to their heavenly homes. Motley tells us, in his "History of the Dutch Republic," of a wonderful scene which occurred in Flanders at the burning of a father and son for heresy by the notorious Peter Titelmann, simply because they refused to attend mass, and practiced private worship at their own homes. "When at the stake the youth prayed, 'O God! eternal Father! accept the sacrifice of our lives, in the name of thy beloved Son.' 'Thou liest, scoundrel,' fiercely interrupted a monk who was lighting the fagots; 'God is not your Father; ye are the devil's children.' As the flames rose above them, the boy cried out to his father, who was burning with him, 'Look, my father, all heaven is opening, and I see ten thousand angels rejoicing over us. Let us be glad, for we are dying for the truth.' To this the infuriated and fiendish monk replied again, 'Thou liest! Thou liest! All hell is opening, and thou seest ten thousand devils thrusting you into eternal fire.' Eight days after this," the historian adds, "his mother and another brother were

burned." * Who can doubt that this vision was granted to this dear Christian boy to strengthen him and his father for their sufferings, and cheer them with the hope of eternal life? Who would not much rather have been in the place of that burning boy than to have the character and suffer the doom *of the fiendish monk?* Alas! these scenes of bloody persecution, under the power and at the instigation of the Romish Church, have not been infrequent in the history of the Church. Nor would they be rare now, if they had the power again in their hands. But God has never forsaken his people, even in the darkest hours of persecution; and inquisition walls, and gloomy dungeons, and blood-stained racks, and flaming stakes have resounded with shouts of triumph and praise at the presence of Jesus and his holy angels. The ministrations of angels to dying saints are just as real now as they were to Elijah, the Hebrew children, and Daniel. "O would to God," said an eminently pious lady, a few years since, while upon her death-bed, "ye saw what I see! Behold, I see infinite millions of angels about me, with

* "Dutch Republic," vol. i, p. 336.

fiery chariots to defend me; those are appointed of God to carry my soul into the kingdom of heaven."

Dr. Berg tells us of a little schoolmate of his who met an early death. One day, during his illness, as he sat propped up with pillows, panting for breath, there was a sudden flush upon his features. He raised his little hand and whispered, "O listen! That sweet praise!" Then, starting up, he followed with his hands the objects which were before his vision, saying, "Let me go—dress me—let me go with them:" and so departed from this world to join them in their heavenly abodes. Multitudes of similar instances might be furnished, but I will only give one more. A few years since, not far from the banks of the noble Hudson, a little boy was taken seriously ill. No hope of his recovery was entertained from the first attack of the disease. As he lay one day looking steadily upward, he said, as he pointed with his finger, "See the angels up there!" His brother turning his eye to the place, and not being able to discern any thing unusual, the little boy again said, "Don't you see them? Don't you see the angels?" Then

he called his parents to see them ; and, as they could not see what was apparent to him, they began to weep. The dying child then said, " Mother, don't weep for me; they have come for me, and I am going with the angels," and in a few moments his happy spirit ascended to God.

Gerald Massey, one of England's renowned self-made poets, in his touching poem of " Babe Christabel," has said :

" In this dim world of clouding cares,
We rarely know, till 'wildered eyes
See white wings lessening up the skies,
The angels with us unawares.

" Our beautiful bird of light hath fled :
Awhile she sat with folded wings,
Sang round us a few hoverings,
Then straightway into glory sped :
And white-winged angels nurture her,
With heaven's white radiance robed and crowned.

" Strange glory streams through life's wild rents,
And through the open door of death,
We see the heaven that beckoneth
To the beloved, going hence."

The instances above given are only specimens of a great multitude. We have given these because they seem to illustrate and

confirm the eternal truth of God's word, and the hopes of God's saints in all the ages, whether they have departed to heaven from the dungeon, the block, or the stake; from the amphitheater or the rack; or from quiet homes and downy beds. The angels have been always near, and their wings outspread to escort the saints of God to their heavenly home.

Dear reader, when you and I come upon our dying-bed, whenever or wherever that may be, may we see the heavens opening, and not only "see Jesus standing at the right hand of God," as did the dying Stephen, but may we also be favored with seeing the bright forms of angelic spirits hovering around our dying couch, and waiting to convey our spirits home! So our beloved bishop, Davis W. Clark, passed away. We are told that "one evening, just before his death—it was at the twilight hour—he suddenly roused up, and, though he had not spoken more than a sentence for nearly two days, he said feebly, 'Tireless company! tireless song!' Then, pausing a moment, he continued, 'The song of the angels is a glorious song. It thrills my ears even now.'

Pausing again, he spoke with renewed strength, 'I am going to join the angels' song. Glorious God! Blessed Saviour! Bless the Lord, O my soul!' and then he sank into an unconscious state, from which he never awoke until the angels ushered him into the presence of his Saviour and God." Can there be any doubt that he had heard the angels' song, and had gazed upon the "tireless company" who sing it?

It is said of Mr. Hammond, that "on the day before his death he said, 'What brightness is this I see?' and his attendants said, 'It is the sunshine.' 'Nay,' said he, 'it is my Saviour's shine. Now farewell, world, welcome, heaven; the day-star from on high hath visited my heart. I doubt not but you all see that light; but I shall feel a light within me that none of you all can know.' Then turning to a minister standing near he continued: 'God deals familiarly with men. I feel his mercy; I see his majesty; whether in the body, I cannot tell, God—he knoweth; but I see things that are unutterable.' At last raising himself up on his bed, he ended his life by saying, 'O thou fiery chariot, that camest down to fetch

Elijah, carry me to my happy hold; and all you blessed angels that attended the soul of Lazarus to bring it to heaven, bear me, O bear me into the bosom of my best Beloved. Amen, Amen. Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly!' And so he fell asleep."

But not only are they with the saint of God when he is dying, they also minister an entrance unto him abundantly into the heavenly world. If there is joy in heaven when sinners repent; if their victories over Satan give them joy; if they minister to them through all the varying scenes of time; and if they are with them in the dying hour—surely, when the struggle is over, the conflict passed, the victory finally and fully won, and heaven gained, their exultations will know no bound!

Bunyan, the wondrous dreamer, seems to have had a bright vision of this welcome of the saint into heaven by the angel throng. When Christian and Hopeful had got over the river, he says: "Now upon the bank of the river, on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore, being come out of the river, they saluted them, saying, 'We are ministering

spirits, sent forth to minister for those that shall be heirs of salvation.' Thus they went along toward the gate. . . .Now while they were thus drawing toward the gate, behold, a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them; to whom it was said by the other two shining ones, 'These are the men that have loved our Lord when they were in the world, and that have left all for his holy name; and he hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy.' Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying, 'Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb!' Rev. xix, 9. There came out also at this time to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who, with melodious voices and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world, and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

"This done, they compassed them round on every side; some went before, some behind, and

some on the right hand, and some on the left, (as it were to guard them through the upper regions,) continually sounding as they went, with melodious noise, in notes on high; so that the very sight was to them that could behold it as if heaven itself was come down to meet them. Thus, therefore, they walked on together; and, as they walked, ever and anon these trumpeters, even with joyful sound, would, by mixing their music with looks and gestures, still signify to Christian and his brother how welcome they were into their company, and with what gladness they came to meet them. And now were these two men, as it were, in heaven, before they came at it, being swallowed up with the sight of angels, and with hearing their melodious notes. Here, also, they had the city itself in view; and they thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, to welcome them thereto. But, above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there with such company, and that for ever and ever!" Then he saw them come to the gate, their welcome by patriarchs and prophets, their harps and crowns of gold; and heard their songs min-

gling with those of the angels and redeemed. "After that they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, *I wished myself among them.*"

O, if we may only thus be welcomed to heaven when we leave this world, it will be nothing to die—aye, it will be bliss to die! As our beloved Bishop Haven said when he was passing away from earth, "It is so delightful dying—it is so pleasant, so beautiful—*the angels are here*—God lifts me up in his arms. I cannot see the river of death—there is no river—it is all light—I am floating away from earth up into heaven—I am gliding away unto God."

In a similar strain, the author of "Yesterday, To-day, and Forever," says, in describing the vision of his admission into heaven:

"A company of angels, clothed in light,
Thronging the path, or in the amber air
Suspense. And in the twinkling of an eye
We were among them, and they clustered round,
And waved their wings, and struck their harps again
For gladness; every look was tenderness,
And every word was musical with joy.

"Welcome to heaven, dear brother, welcome home!
Welcome to thy inheritance of light!

Welcome forever to thy Master's joy '
Thy work is done, thy pilgrimage is past ;
Thy guardian angel's vigil is fulfilled ;
Thy parents wait thee in the bowers of bliss ;
Thy infant babes have woven wreaths for thee ;
Thy brethren, who have entered into rest,
Long for thy coming ; and the angel choirs
Are ready with their symphonies of praise.
Nor shall thy voice be mute ; a golden harp
For thee is hanging on the trees of life ;
And sweetly shall its chords forever ring,
Responsive to thy touch of ecstasy,
With hallelujahs to thy Lord and ours."

— *Yesterday, To-day, and Forever*, pp. 38, 39.

"Suddenly
In heaven appeared a host of angels strong,
With chariots and with steeds of burning fire,
Cherub and seraph, thrones, dominions, powers,
Bright in celestial armor, dazzling rode,
And leading in the front, illustrious shone,
Michael and Gabriel, servants long approved
In high commission, girt that day with power
Which naught created, man or devil, might
Resist. Nor waited, gazing, long; but quick
Descending, silently and without song,
As servants bent to do their Master's work,
To middle air they raised the human race,
Above the path long traveled by the sun;
And as a shepherd from the sheep divides
The goats; or husbandmen, with reaping bands,
In harvest, separates the precious wheat,
Selected from the tares, so did they part
Mankind, the good and bad, to right and left,
To meet no more."

CHAPTER XIV.

ANGELS AT THE RESURRECTION AND THE JUDGMENT.

THESE two great events are rapidly coming on. The resurrection of the dead is a great gospel fact, and so is the general judgment. It is not for us here to prove, or even illustrate, these facts; but to show the presence of angels in them, and the part which they will take in their scenes of grandeur and glory. And we are not left to any presumption, or mere conjecture, here. The teachings of the divine word, the utterances of the Son of God himself, present these things before us with a vividness and forcefulness which it is impossible to resist, and which no human language can possibly improve.

The fact of the resurrection of the human body, and of the whole race, founded upon the astounding miracle of Christ's resurrection, is one of the most glorious contained in the word of God. It robs death of its terror and gloom, it lifts up the mantle of darkness from the

tomb, and pours over all its territories the glorious light of immortality and eternal life. For that fact we are solely indebted to the volume of divine revelation. It is not taught elsewhere. It is only hinted at in the volume of nature; but, when it is revealed in the word, it receives beautiful illustrations from its outspread pages. "Life and immortality are only brought to light in the Gospel, and by him who hath abolished, or counterworked, death." It is in the same Gospel that we learn of the participation of the angels in its stirring and glorious scenes. We do not mean, of course, that angels can or will raise the dead by their own power. No!

> "An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave,
> Legions of angels can't confine me there."

But they will be employed in various ways in connection with that event, and will be permitted to bear a part in all its scenes.

And, first: The resurrection will be proclaimed by "*the voice of the archangel.*" When Paul would comfort and assure the hearts of his persecuted brethren in Thessalonica, he writes to them, "I would not have you to be

ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, *with the voice of the archangel*, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

Our Saviour, foreannouncing this period of resurrection and judgment, says, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And *he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they* shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." The second coming of Christ to raise the dead and judge the world is in almost every instance associated with the presence and co-operation of the angels. So the apostle says to the Thessalonians in his second letter: "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from

heaven *with his mighty angels.*" In the explanation which Christ gave of the parable of the wheat and tares, he says: "The field is the world: the harvest is the end of the world: *the reapers are the angels.*" St. Paul, in that wonderful chapter in first Corinthians, where he speaks of the character and certainty of the resurrection of the dead, says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at *the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound*, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." It was in connection with the judgment scene that Daniel had the wonderful vision of angels. He saw the thrones cast down, and the Ancient of days seated upon a throne, like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. It was then he saw thousand thousands ministering unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before Him. Then "*the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*"

Again, there will be a separation made by the angels between the righteous and the wicked. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his

kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xiii, 41–43. In explaining and enforcing the parable of the drag-net, and the separation of the good and bad fish which were caught therein, Christ says, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."

At that time, also, the confessors of Christ shall be acknowledged before the Father and all the holy angels. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." Here we see, in the language of Mr. Watson, that "to all such persons Christ promises a public acknowledgment before the angels of God, referring, no doubt, to his second coming. This acknowledgment will, doubtless, be a solemn act in the presence of the assembled angels, that all orders of intelligent holy beings may know the grounds of the divine procedure at that great day, a circumstance that shall minister more than we can conceive to their instruction, and, perhaps, future safety: since

the wonderful discoveries of good and evil which that day will make, and the rewards and punishments of infinite variety which will be assigned, will form such a manifestation of God, in his government of his creatures, as has never before taken place, and must be remembered with awe and joy throughout eternity. But previous to the final act *of acknowledgment* before the throne, there will be a distinguishing recognition. The angels of God will be the instruments of gathering together the elect from the four winds of heaven; they rise *first*, so that they are thus acknowledged to be the 'dead in Christ,' them that 'sleep in Jesus,' before the angels, on that occasion, become their willing and joyful ministers." But there will be, also, a fearful counterpart to this transaction; for they "who have *denied* him before men, them will he also deny before his Father and all the holy angels." How fearful will this be! When those who have denied him, have set at naught his claims, have trampled upon his blood and counted it an unholy thing, have not accepted him, nor believed on him as the divine Messiah, have blasphemed his name and persecuted his followers, shall hear him say:

"I know you not, whence ye are;" or, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

This will be the grand closing scene of their connection with the race of mankind, so far as their probationary career is concerned. Through all the long roll of the centuries they have witnessed the deeds of men. They have been present amid all the busy, exciting scenes of this world's affairs. They have been the witnesses of the struggles, the conflicts, the sorrows, the privations and persecutions, of the followers of Christ, the martyrs and confessors of his Church. Now they behold their triumphant vindication. Now they witness the consummation of all God's wonderful dealings with his people. Not only so: they have witnessed the rejection, the denial, of Christ in the world which he redeemed with his blood. They have heard the blasphemous utterances made by skeptics and infidels, by the unbelieving and ungodly. And they now see the justice of God in their terrible doom.

One thing more remains to be done before the final closing of this wonderful and awful drama. As the angels themselves were once

in a state of probation, and as they have been employed in connection with the race from the beginning of the creation, they are also to be judged on that day. "Know ye not," Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "that *we shall judge angels?*" 1 Cor. vi, 3. We do not know exactly how this judgment will be rendered. The process of this great event is not revealed to us. Nor does it appear whether this refers to the *good angels* alone, or to the bad or evil angels alone; or to the good and bad together. "Chrysostom, Theodoret, Œcumenius, Theophylact, and most commentators, interpret it of *bad angels*, or of *bad* and *good* together; and Chrysostom, as before, understands that the bad angels will be condemned by comparison with us."—*Alford.* For fuller light upon this revealed fact we must wait until the great day.

When the whole judgment-scene is over, and the saints and holy angels have been judged and rewarded, and the wicked and evil angels have been condemned and punished, then, doubtless, the blessed angels will escort the redeemed and glorified to their everlasting abodes of blessedness and joy. And then, also, they will guard the wicked and condemned

angels and men to hell's prison-house, where they will be held bound in chains forever.

The whole scene will then end. The angels will return to their everlasting abodes. The saints will be all saved, crowned, and glorified. The work of redemption will be fully accomplished. The universe will be purged of all elements of evil, which shall henceforth be confined to the abodes of the condemned. The Lord Jesus Christ will lay aside his judicial and mediatorial robes. For "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power." 1 Cor. xv, 24.

And then, through all eternity, songs of praises will ascend from the countless throngs of the redeemed and angelic hosts to God and the Lamb. May we be among that glorious company! May we mingle in their songs of endless joy!

"Deaf would I be to earthly sounds, to greet
With thought intent, and fixed on things above,
The high angelic strains, the accent sweet,
In which true peace accords with perfect love;
Each living instrument, the breath that plays
Upon its strings from chord to chord conveys,
And to one end so perfectly they move,
That nothing jars the eternal harmony:
Love melts each voice, love lifts its accents high,
Love beats the time, presides o'er every string.
The angelic orchestra one signal sways;
The sound becomes more sweet, the more it strays
Through varying changes, in harmonious maze;
He who the song inspired, prompts all who sing."

—Vittoria Colonna,
Sixteenth Century

CHAPTER XV.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF ANGELS IN HEAVEN.

WE are not to suppose for a moment that the employments of the angels are limited to the guardianship of God's saints, or their ministration to the heirs of salvation. This, it is true, is a question which most deeply interests and concerns *us*. But there are other worlds, to which, if they are inhabited, their ministrations and agencies doubtless extend; and heaven itself, their everlasting abode, is the scene of their constant service, and is ever resonant with their songs of praise and joy. They are ever engaged in doing the will of God and in glorifying his name—praising him for his works of creation, redemption, and providence, and adoring his wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, goodness, and power. Hence the royal psalmist says, "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word."

Isaiah, in his vision already referred to, saw

the vast train of the Almighty filling the temple, while above it stood the six-winged seraphim. He describes their worship and service as follows: "And one cried to another [responsively] and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is filled with his glory." In Ezekiel's visions we behold the ceaseless activities of these celestial beings, both on earth and in heaven, ever on the wing, ever moving in harmony with the divine will, and for the execution of the divine purposes. Daniel saw the countless thousands standing before the throne and ministering to Him who sat upon it.

Similar to the vision of Ezekiel is that of John on the Isle of Patmos. He saw the four living creatures, each of them with six wings about him: "They were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." And when they "give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast

their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Here, then, we see in the worship of the heavenly host that they ascribe to God holiness, eternity, almightiness, and the creation of all things by his power and for his pleasure. And in view of his attributes and his works they declare that he is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power.

In the fifth chapter of that wonderful book, after we have been permitted to listen to the song of the redeemed in their worship of God and the Lamb, in which they say, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth:" then we learn that the revelator "heard the voice also of many angels round about the throne," and the living creatures and the elders; "and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to

receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And to this wonderful song there was heard in response, from "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

In the seventh chapter, after the one hundred and forty-four thousand had been sealed, John tells us that he "saw a great multitude, which no man could number," and heard their songs of joy and salvation. Then he saw all the angels standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures, and falling before them, "saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." The careful reader will not have failed to notice the gradation in these ascriptions of praise. In the fourth chapter, the angel songs are to the Lord God Almighty, the Eternal Being who is Creator of all things. In the fifth, the song is to the Lamb that was slain; and equal

honor and praise are ascribed to him; to which the visible universe responds with echoing songs of "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power." And in the seventh, the angels are represented as encircling the innumerable multitudes of the redeemed, and while they utter their songs of "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," they fall on their faces, and in the fullness of their joy they worship God, saying "Amen" to their wonderful song.

Mr. Henry, in his commentary on the seventh chapter, says, in his usually pertinent way: "The song of praise that was offered up to the Lamb on this occasion consists of three parts; one part sung by the Church, another by the Church and the angels, the third by every creature. The Church begins the doxology, as being more immediately concerned in it; the doxology thus begun by the Church is carried on by the angels, (ver. 11,) who are said to be innumerable, and to be the attendants on the throne of God, and guardians to the Church. Although they did not need a Saviour themselves, yet they rejoice in the redemption and salvation of sinners; and they agree with

the Church in acknowledging the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus as dying for sinners, that 'He is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.' This doxology, thus begun by the Church, and carried on by the angels, is resounded and echoed by the whole creation, (ver. 13;) heaven and earth ring with the high praises of the Redeemer; the whole creation fares the better for Christ, *by whom all things consist;* and all the creatures, had they sense and language, would adore that great Redeemer, who delivers them from the bondage under which it groans, through the corruption of men."

Throughout the whole book of Revelation the angels are every-where flitting before our eyes. Now falling down upon their faces, or covering them with their wings, and worshiping before the throne of God and the Lamb; then holding the four winds of the earth; sealing the servants of God upon their foreheads; blowing with their trumpets; flying through the midst of heaven; pouring out their vials of wrath upon the earth; thrusting in their sickles and reaping the harvest of the earth; shouting

over the overthrow of Babylon; and, finally, binding the Old Serpent for a thousand years.

But in all these representations we must observe how careful the revelator is to show the difference between the redeemed and blood-washed saints and the angelic hosts. Many persons have thought that the angels are merely glorified saints, and that every saint on leaving this world becomes an angel. It is true that we have no means of knowing to what extent, or in what manner, if at all, departed saints may mingle among men and minister to them. There is no *proof*, indeed, that they do either. There is nothing in the word of God which would lead us to the positive belief that they ever come back to this world, or mingle in its various scenes. The conjecture which is cherished by many that they do thus come back to us, that they are present with us, that they comfort us in our trials, cheer us in our sorrows, relieve us in our loneliness, and strengthen us in our weakness, is a pleasant one; and, with certain limitations, harmless, if within the bounds in which a glorified spirit might reasonably be supposed to act. But when such a conjecture is made

the vehicle for the wild dreams and vagaries of modern spiritualism, with its table-turning, its writing of bad grammar and worse sense, its gymnastics, its utterances contrary to the teachings of God's word and subversive of the same, it becomes a source of unbelief, deception, immorality, and mischief, and the devil's agency for the blinding of the hearts and minds of men. The little hymns, taught formerly to our Sunday-school children, and sung so beautifully by millions, "I want to be an angel," and, "O then I'll be an angel," were in direct opposition to the clearest and plainest teachings of God's word. Many parents and friends, too, when they lose their children and friends say, "They are angels now." All this is a mistaken view. *Our children never become angels.* The saints of God are always distinguished from the angels. It is nowhere said in the word of God that we shall become angels. But it is said, by the Lord of the angels, we shall be made *like* the angels, and *equal* to the angels; but we still will be "children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke xx, 36.

And in the clearest revelations which we

have of the employments of the heavenly world—those which are given in the apocalyptic vision, and which we have already dwelt upon —there is an evident purpose to distinguish between the saints and angels. They differ in their relative position before the throne. The saints are "nearest the eternal throne" of God and the Lamb, while the angels stand round them and the throne. They differ in their songs of praise. The saints sing the new song, which tells of their personal redemption through the blood of the Lamb, and of their personal cleansing in that blood. The angels, while they say "Amen" to that song, can never join in singing it; for they are not redeemed. They never needed redemption. They were never befouled by sin, and so never needed the cleansing blood of the Lamb. They never fell under the condemnation of Jehovah, and so were never brought to need pardon and salvation. They never knew what it is to stand on hell's burning brink, just ready to fall into its devouring flames, and to be rescued from the "everlasting burning." They never saw the wrath of God continually hanging over their heads. They never felt the sharp pangs of a

guilty conscience, or stood trembling under the thunders of a violated law. They never knew what a fearful thing depravity is, with all its elements of evil festering and rankling in the soul. And so, they never knew of the joys of pardon and salvation. They never experienced the blessedness of deliverance from wrath, and security in Christ Jesus. They never felt the cleansing blood flowing through every avenue of the soul, and washing away all its crimson stains. Consequently, they cannot sing the song of redemption. Well does the poet say,

"Earth has a joy unknown to heaven,
The newborn peace of sins forgiven;
Tears of such pure and deep delight,
Ye angels, never dimmed your sight.

"Ye saw, of old, on chaos rise
The beauteous pillars of the skies;
Ye know where morn exulting springs,
And evening folds her drooping wings.

"Bright heralds of the eternal Will,
Abroad his errands ye fulfill;
Or, throned in floods of beamy day,
Symphonious in his presence play.

"Loud is the song; the heavenly plain
Is shaken with the choral strain;
And dying echoes, floating far,
Draw music from each chiming star.

"But I amid your choirs shall shine,
And all your knowledge shall be mine:
Ye on your harps must lean to hear
A secret chord that mine will bear."

—A. L. HILLHOUSE.

Angels are of a different rank and order of beings; and the distinction between them and even redeemed and glorified beings is so clearly made, that our minds should ever be at rest on that question. Those who die in the Lord are not angels. They are redeemed, blood-washed spirits; and they shall bear the image of their Lord forever. That is sufficient to indicate their happiness, their purity, their glory, and their joy. They are *as* the angels, like the angels, equal to the angels, *with* the angels in blissful companionship; but, above all this, being redeemed, they are nearest to the throne of God and the Lamb. And yet, while they may lean on their harps to listen to the song of the redeemed, the saints of God will doubtless lean upon their harps to listen to their songs, sung by beings with nobler powers. With songs resounding "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings;" and "sweet as from voices blest uttering joy."

"High the angel choirs are raising
Heart and voice in harmony:
The Creator King still praising,
Whom in beauty there they see.
Sweetest strains from soft harps stealing;
Trumpet notes of triumph pealing;
Radiant wings and white stoles gleaming,
Up the steps of glory streaming;
Where the heavenly bells are ringing:
Holy, holy, holy! crying,
For all earthly care and sighing
In that city cease to be!

"Every voice is there harmonious,
Praising God in hymns symphonious;
Love each heart with light unfolding,
As they stand in peace beholding
There the triune Deity!
Whom adore the seraphim
Aye with love eternal burning;
Venerate the cherubim,
To their fount of honor turning;
Whilst angelic thrones adoring,
Gaze upon His majesty.

"O, how beautiful that region!
And how fair that heavenly legion,
Where thus men and angels blend!
Glorious will that city be,
Full of sweet tranquility,
Light and peace from end to end!
All the happy dwellers there,
Shine in robes of purity,
Keep the laws of charity,
Bound in firmest unity;—

Labor finds them not, nor care.
Ignorance can ne'er perplex,
Nothing tempt them, nothing vex;
Joy and health their fadeless blessing,
Always all things good possessing!"

—THOMAS A KEMPIS.

We have thus considered the origin of these wonderful beings. We have traced the history of their manifestations from the beginning. We have learned their character, their ministrations and employments. And here we must leave this, to us, most interesting theme. Perhaps we shall never know any thing more of the angels in "this dim world of clouding cares." But what we already know is sufficient for our faith and our hope, our comfort and satisfaction. Many curious and vain questions may arise in our minds which we would like to know about, but the curtain is dropped here, and the dark veil of sense hangs between us and them. We must wait in patience for future revelations and manifestations. If we serve the Lord and Master whom they serve; if we do his will upon the earth as they do it in heaven, then it will not be long before we shall see them *as* they are, and be with them *where* they are. We can afford to wait that

"little while." It will soon be past. The veil will be removed, the darkness will pass away forever, and we shall "see as we are seen, and know as we are known." How bright and blessed the revelation of their beautiful face and form will be! How rapturously we shall listen to their songs of joy and praise, perfected during the worshipings of more than six thousand years! How charmed we shall be in their society, and how, with frequent outbursts of songs of praises, we shall listen to their recitals of creation, redemption, and providence! O blessed home where they dwell! O blessed, and glorious, and innumerable their company! O the thought of spending eternity in such a home, with such society, amid such scenes and such songs, is enough to fill our souls, even here and now, with unutterable delight!

Dear reader, we have thus endeavored to communicate to you all we have been able to learn, from every source of information and illustration within our reach, about the angels of God. Some who will peruse these pages will be unknown to us. We have, probably,

never met upon the earth, and we may never meet here. But should we gain the world—the home—where the angels dwell, we shall then compare what we have read, or written, with the facts as we shall there behold them. And while the writer will, no doubt, be humbled because his knowledge was so limited, and his conceptions so narrow, and his words so feeble, yet we may rejoice together that, while we sojourned upon the earth, we were permitted to know as much as we now do of those celestial beings, who are so infinitely above our conceptions in their numbers, their beauty, their power, their glory, and their bliss. That we may meet at last in the angel-home, is the sincere and earnest prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

THE END.

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